MARK WAID • CHRIS SAMNEE • MATTHEW WILSON

BLACK WIDOW

THE COMPLETE COLLECTION

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SAMNEE '15
MW

1

KRAK
FAK
WHUMP
ATTENTION ALL PERSONNEL!
THIS IS DIRECTOR HILL!
EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, AGENT NATASHA ROMANOFF, CODE-NAME BLACK WIDOW--
--IS TO BE CONSIDERED AN ENEMY OF S.H.I.E.L.D.!

SHE IS TO BE STOPPED AT ANY COST!

GET HER!
I REPEAT--
--THE BLACK WIDOW CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO EXIT THIS FACILITY!

HILL ALWAYS SAID YOU WERE *TOUGH*.
FWUDD
I AIN'T IMPRESSED.
THAT ALL YOU GOT, YOU SKINNY LITTLE--
RRNCH
DAB ID!
GED HRR!
DEAD END, RED.

BLACK
WIDOW

WHAT DO YOU [redacted] MEAN, SHE JUMPED?
DO YOU REALIZE WHAT SHE STOLE FROM US?
RECOVER HER!
SHNK
SCREE
13
VVVVRRRRN
13

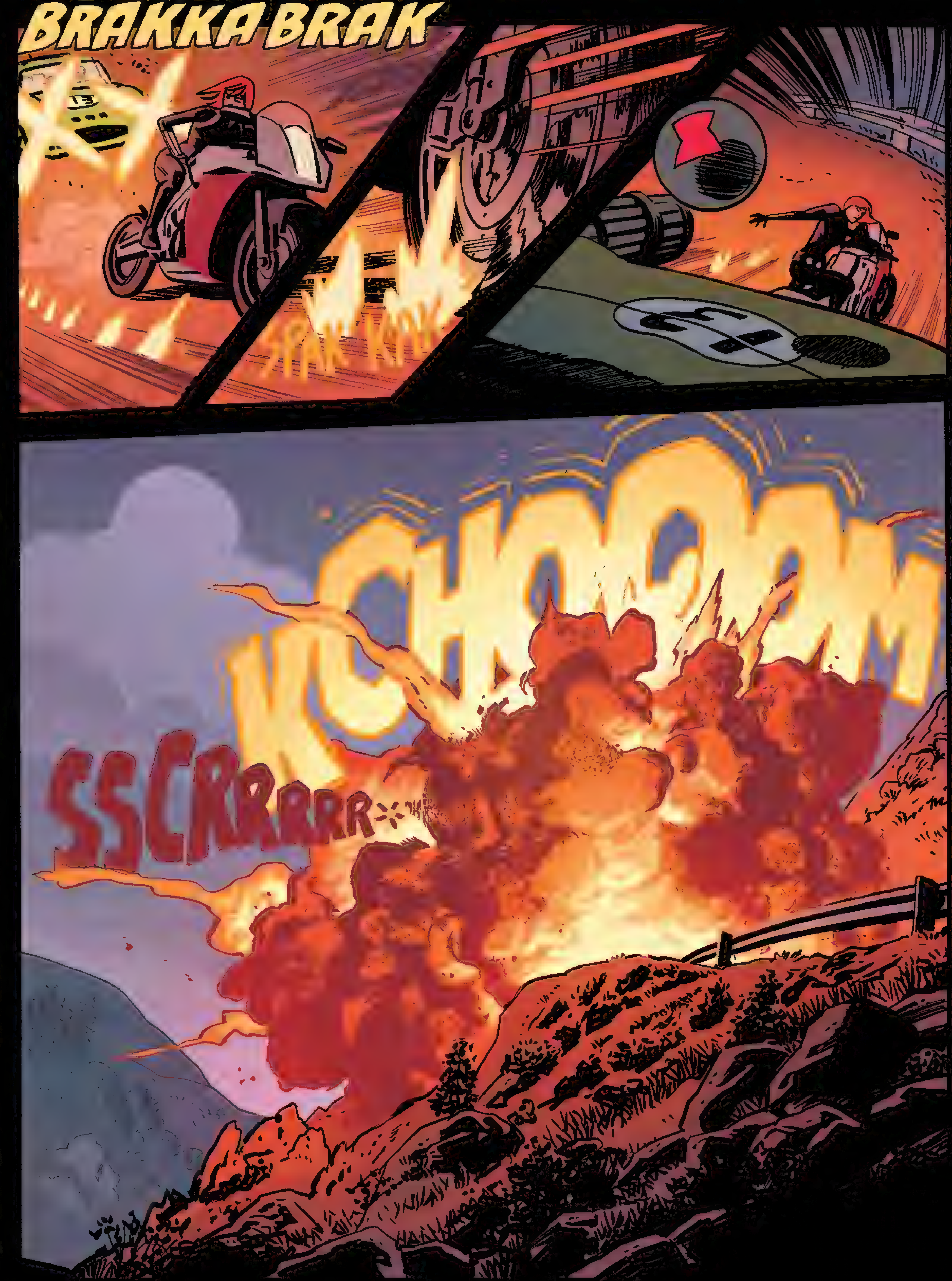
13

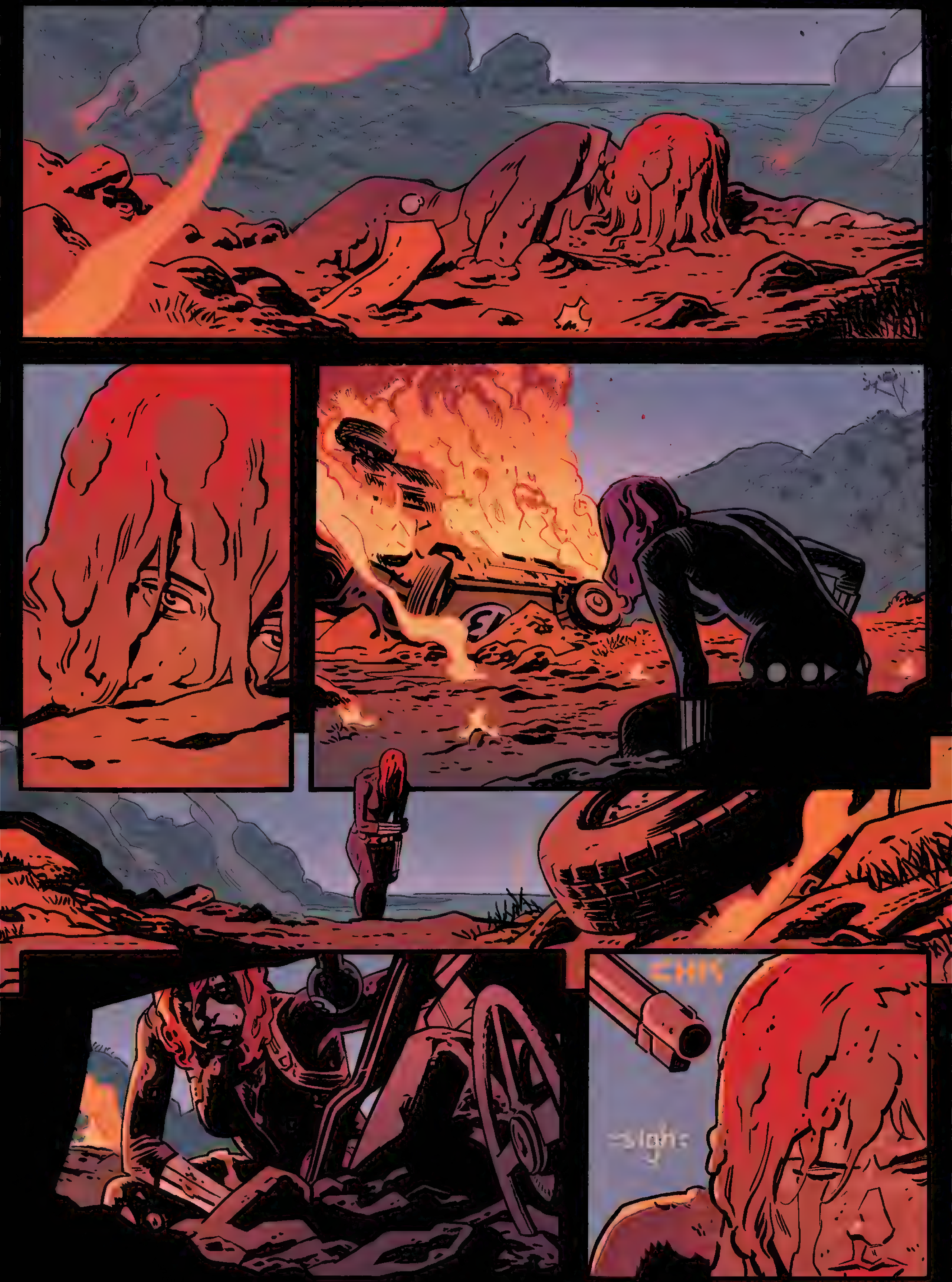
TAP
CLINK
KSHAKT!

CUTE.
WHAT'S YOUR PLAN NOW, ROMANOFF?
YEAH. 'SWHAT I THOUGHT.
?
HEY! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE--
ZZK

BWABOOOMM
FAR
WHUMPF
CHUD
MOTHER MURPHY. SHE TURNS A 40,000 FOOT FALL INTO A BALLET...

"ANY COST." HILL'S EXACT ORDER. OKAY.
KSHNK
BRAKKAKK BRAKKABRAKKA BR
STAND DOWN, ROMANOFF! LAST CHANCE!


BRAKKA BRAK
13
SPAK
VCHOOOM
SSCRRRRR


CHK
sigh

KAK
CLIK
SPAK
CHD
RNCH
KAF
SPSSH

WHATEVER--
-HFFF-
--YOU PINCHED FROM US--
-HFFF-
--WIDOW--
-HFFF-
--I HOPE IT WAS WORTH IT.
CHOK
CHOK

ME, TOO.

DON'T
FALL
INTO
HER
WEB

TULA LOTAY

NO. 1 VARIANT

SAMNEE '15
MW

2

ONE WEEK AGO...
I READ TO YOU FROM THE BOOK OF ISAIAH, CHAPTER 57:
"NO ONE UNDERSTANDS THAT THE RIGHTEOUS ARE TAKEN AWAY TO BE SPARED FROM EVIL.
00687573
"THOSE WHO WALK UPRIGHTLY ENTER INTO PEACE; THEY FIND REST AS THEY LIE IN DEATH."

AGENT ELDER, MY CONDOLENCES.
YOUR PROTÉGÉ WAS A VALUED AGENT.
SHE WAS *COMMITTED*. *SHE* SHOULD HAVE BEEN LEADING THAT MISSION, HILL.
NOT YOUR PET *FREELANCER*.
WHENEVER *THAT* ONE GOES *ROGUE* IN THE *FIELD*-- AND SHE *ALWAYS* DOES-- SHE LEAVES HER SUPPORT TEAM *VULNERABLE*. DAMMIT, HILL...

"...HOW MANY MORE S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENTS ARE GOING TO *DIE*--
"--THANKS TO THE *BLACK WIDOW?*"

FREELANCE OR NOT, ELDER, WIDOW HAS TRAINING WE CAN'T MATCH.
COLD COMFORT. MY GIRL DOESN'T EVEN GET A PROPER **HEADSTONE**. SHE'S BURIED IN **SECRET**.
YOU KNOW THE PROTOCOLS, ELDER.
IT KEEPS THEM OUT OF THE ENEMY'S REACH EVEN AFTER DEATH.
LET THEM REST IN **PEACE**.
0207808
0207810
"NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT THIS GRAVEYARD BUT S.H.I.E.L.D.
"THAT WAY, WE CAN PAY OUR RESPECTS WITHOUT MAKING **TARGETS** OUT OF OURSELVES."

A LEFTOVER FURY DIRECTIVE.
I'M AWARE OF THE HISTORY.
NUMBER 17, TAKE AIM.
17, DO YOU COPY?

SOMETIMES I FORGET HOW LONG YOU'VE BEEN AN AGENT.
CERTAINLY SINCE BEFORE WE STARTED OUTSOURCING TO AVENGERS.
ELDER...
KRAK
KRKT

YOU HAVE ANYTHING PREPARED? ANYTHING YOU WANT TO SAY?
NOT REALLY.
NOTHING THAT GIVES HER DEATH ANY **PURPOSE**.
ELDER, COME ON.
NUMBER 23, I'M GETTING NO RESPONSE FROM ANYONE IN YOUR FLANK. IT'S ON YOU. MOVE IN.
SHE'S RIGHT BY THE GRAVE MARKER.
TAKE OUT **HILL**.

ALL RIGHT. JUST BETWEEN US, AND IN RESPECT TO YOUR GRIEF **AND** YOUR TENURE, I'LL MAKE YOU A PROMISE...
IF WIDOW EVER WANDERS FAR ENOUGH OFF THE RESERVATION THAT IT'S A PROBLEM... SHE'S ALL YOURS.
AND WHO'LL HAVE **HER** BACK? STARK? ROGERS?
THEY WON'T BE AWARE. I CAN CUT HER COLD IF I HAVE TO. AN OFF-BOOK OPERATION.
BUT I DOUBT IT'LL EVER COME TO THAT.
ZDRAVSTVUYTE, COMRADE.

YOU'RE THE LAST ONE. TIME FOR ANSWERS.
HNNH!
WHO SENT YOU? HOW DID HE EVEN KNOW OF THIS PLACE?
THERE **ARE** NO SECRETS FROM **PLATCH LIEV,** WIDOW.
NO WAY TO **HIDE** ONCE THE **WEEPING LION** LOCKS ONTO HIS PREY. HE NEVER FAILS IN HIS OBJECTIVE.
WELL, HE HAS **NOW.** I'VE TAKEN OUT YOUR **ENTIRE CREW.**
BOSS?
GIVE US A LOOK ON YOUR 10, PADRE.
ALSO ONE OF OURS. AND HE HAS MORE AROUND HIM THAN A **COLLAR,** WIDOW.
IN FACT, IT'S A MIRACLE HE CAN EVEN **STAND** WITH SO MUCH C4 UNDER THAT ROBE.
STAY SILENT AND STAND DOWN OR THIS ENTIRE CEMETERY BECOMES A CRATER.

WHY HESITATE?
HILL'S TOTALLY *UNGUARDED*.
BECAUSE SHE WAS NEVER PLATCH LIEV'S *OBJECTIVE*.
YOU WERE.
FWAPT

SHE AWAKES.
WELCOME TO PLATCH LIEV'S DOMAIN, SUKA.
WELCOME TO THE LION'S DEN.
YOU WERE EXAMINED QUITE...THOROUGHLY FOR TRACKING DEVICES AND COMMUNICATORS.
THERE WILL BE NO RESCUE.
HOW FOOLISH DO YOU FEEL FOR WALKING INTO SUCH AN OBVIOUS TRAP?
I ASKED YOU A QUESTION!
WHAT IS YOUR ANSWER?

KRAK
WHUNK

BLAM
PRNCH
NNGH!
TZZZKKT

KRAKKK

CHK
CHK
SO MUCH FOR MY MEN.
YOU DIDN'T EVEN BREAK A *SWEAT.*
CHK
YOU SURROUNDED ME WITH *AMATEURS.*
ALL ANIMALS NEED TO EAT, DYEVUSHKA ROMANOVA.
ESPECIALLY THE CAPTIVE ONES.

DON'T LIE TO YOURSELF, PLATCH LIEV.
"WEEPING LION." I'VE HEARD YOUR NAME.
I'M NO CAPTIVE. YOU'VE NO HOLD ON ME.
NOW WHO'S BEING DISHONEST?
IF YOU'VE INDEED HEARD OF ME, THEN YOU REALIZE THERE'S NO CHANCE OF ESCAPE.
BOZHI MOI, DYEVUSHKA...
...HAVE YOU EVER GONE THROUGH EVEN ONE DAY TELLING THE TRUTH?

HERE.
FOR YOUR PERUSAL.
DEAR GOD...
HOW?
HOW ARE THERE HARD COPIES OF ANY OF THIS?
I MADE SURE *MYSELF* THERE WAS NEVER ANY *RECORD* OF--
I HOPE YOU ARE MORE THOROUGH FOR *ME* THAN YOU'VE BEEN FOR *YOURSELF*.
HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT *THIS?*
YOU'RE ASKING THE WRONG QUESTIONS, NATASHA.

YOU SHOULD BE ASKING HOW BEST TO KEEP ME FROM SHARING THAT INFORMATION.
I HAVE A JOB FOR YOU.
SOMETHING I WISH YOU TO OBTAIN FOR ME. IT WILL REQUIRE A KEY WHICH YOU WILL NEED TO RETRIEVE FROM THE S.H.I.E.L.D. HELICARRIER.
THAT ALONE WILL CREATE PROBLEMS FOR YOU, NO DOUBT, BUT I HAVE FAITH IN YOUR SKILLS. I WOULD ADVISE YOU TO PERSEVERE.
SUCCEED, AND NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW WHAT'S IN THOSE RUINOUS LITTLE FILES.
ARE YOU LISTENING?
DOUBLE-CROSS ME, MANIPULATE ME, BRING IN S.H.I.E.L.D. OR THE AVENGERS, WORK AGAINST ME IN ANY WAY...
...AND WHAT YOU SEE BEFORE YOU INSTANTLY BECOMES PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE.
FINE.
YOU HAVE A DEAL.
I KNOW.

SAMNEE '16
MW

3

NEW YORK CITY.

WE HAVE A MESSAGE.
FROM THE *WEEPING LION.*
YOU'RE TO FLY TO *RUSSIA...*
...TO THE *CATACOMBS* OF THE *RED ROOM...*
...AND RETRIEVE A CERTAIN *FILE.*
A TICKET IS AWAITING YOUR *FRENCH ALIAS* AT KENNEDY.
DON'T SCREW THIS *UP.*

HILL, THIS IS **ELDER**. THE TRAIL IS **HOT**.
TARGET **ACQUIRED**.
CHAK
TWANG
DAMN IT.
WHERE'D SHE GO...?

RUSSIA
NORTH AMERICA

HRK!
OOMPH!
ARGH!
THNK

‹PARRY.›*
‹THRUST.›
‹NATASHA, WATCH YOUR FORM...›
*TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN.

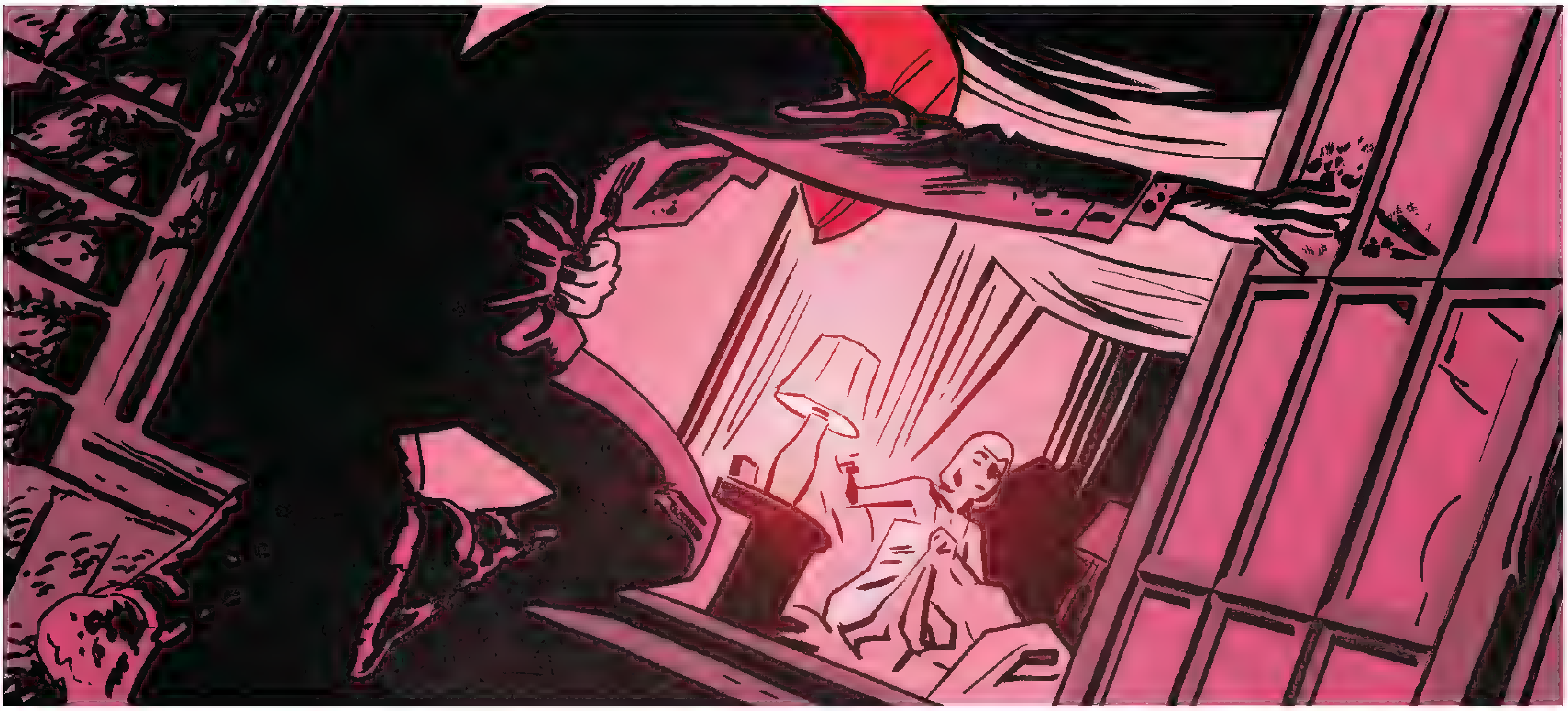
‹GO BACK, ANYA!›
‹HEADMISTRESS IS ALREADY CROSS WITH ME FOR FAILING MY TASK! DO NOT GIVE HER REASON TO BE ANGRY AT HER FAVORITE PUPIL!›
‹I AM NOT MAMA'S LITTLE RECLUSE, NATASHA.›
‹LET ME COME WITH YOU!›
NYET.
‹YOU HAVEN'T THE TRAINING, ANYA. I CANNOT PROTECT YOU. GO BACK TO THE DORMITORY.›
‹THIS IS MY MISSION. AND THIS TIME, I WILL SUCCEED.›
...

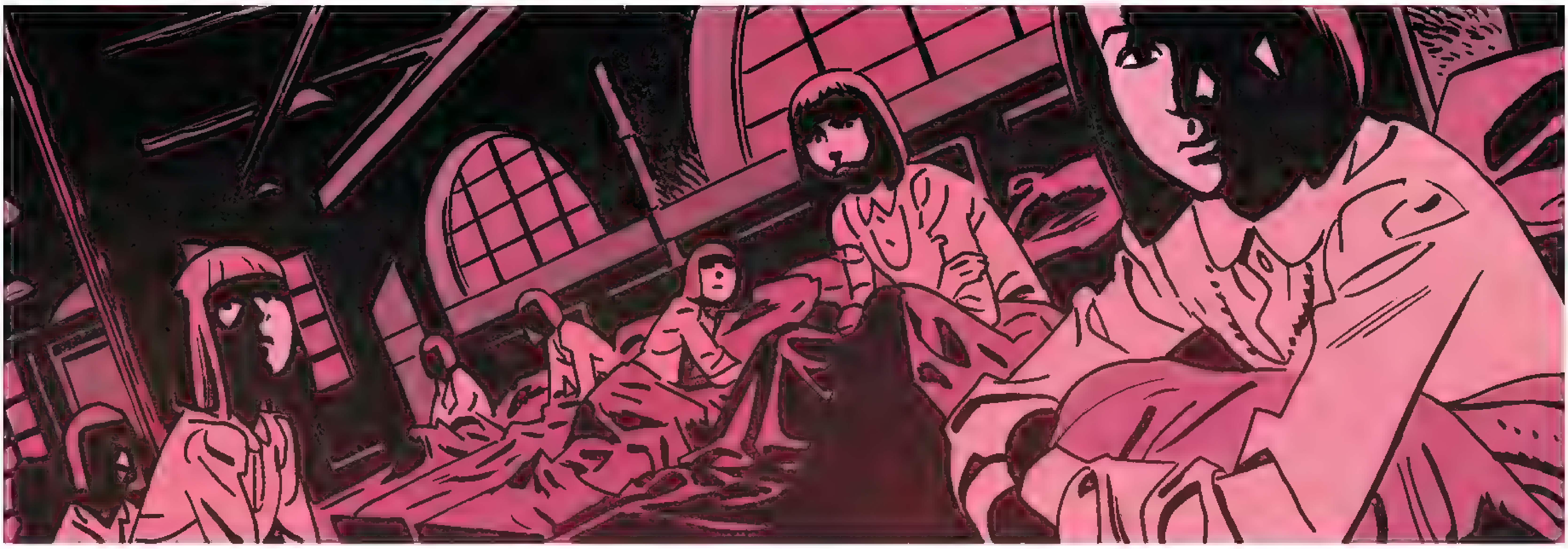
FAK
PAK

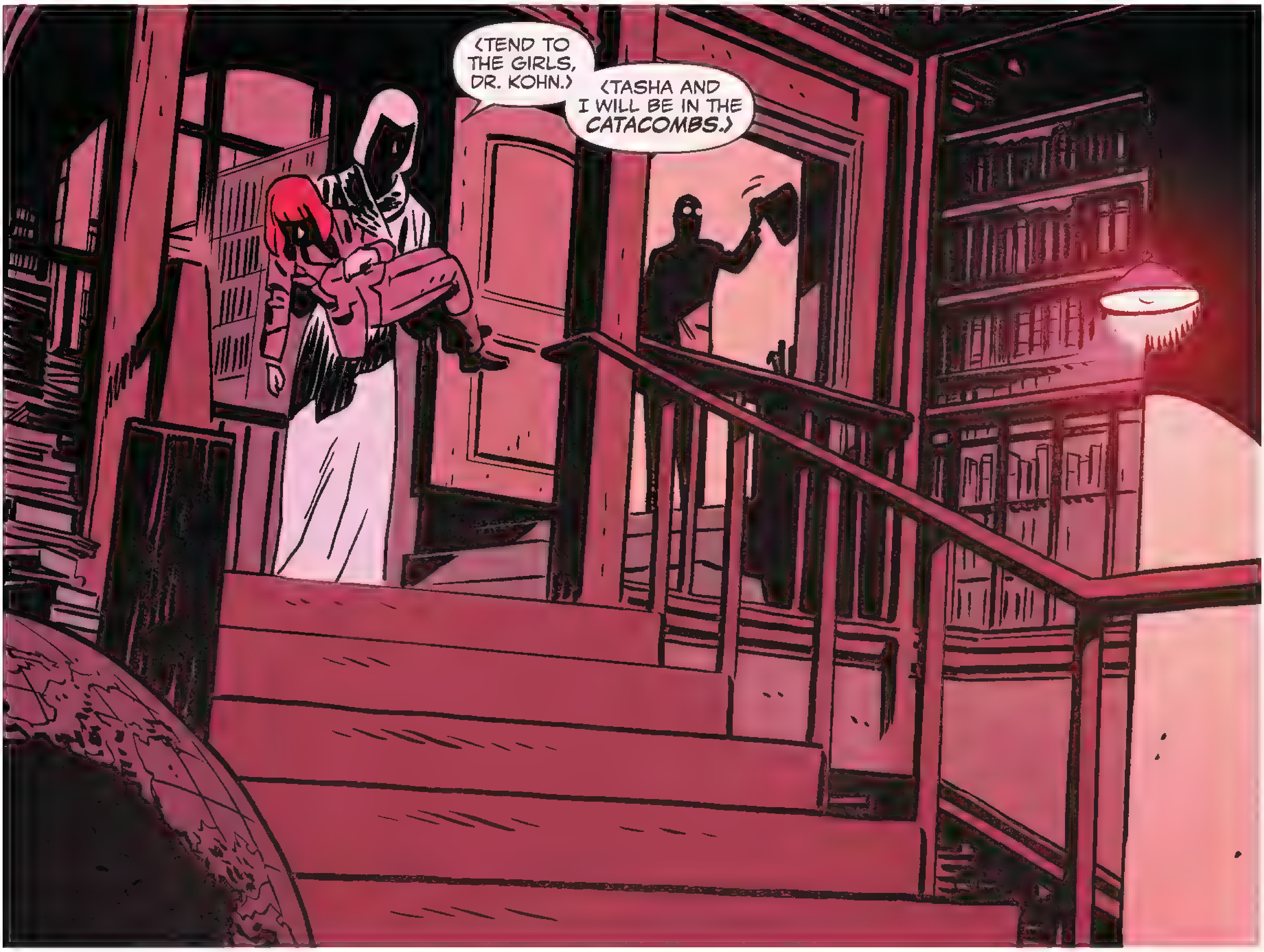
CHYORT!
‹TWELVE ROOMS DOWN, AND WE'VE YET TO FLUSH OUT SO MUCH AS A **LOST BIRD.**›
‹THIS IS A **COLOSSAL** WASTE OF TIME, COMRADE.›
‹TO BELIEVE THAT THIS "LION" **TRULY** HAS SENT SOMEONE TO SCAVENGE THIS **DUNGHEAP** SAYS LITTLE FOR HIS ALLEGED **INTELLIGENCE.**›
‹WHAT IN THIS DUMP COULD POSSIBLY BE WORTH **RETRIEVING?**›
‹WHO--?›

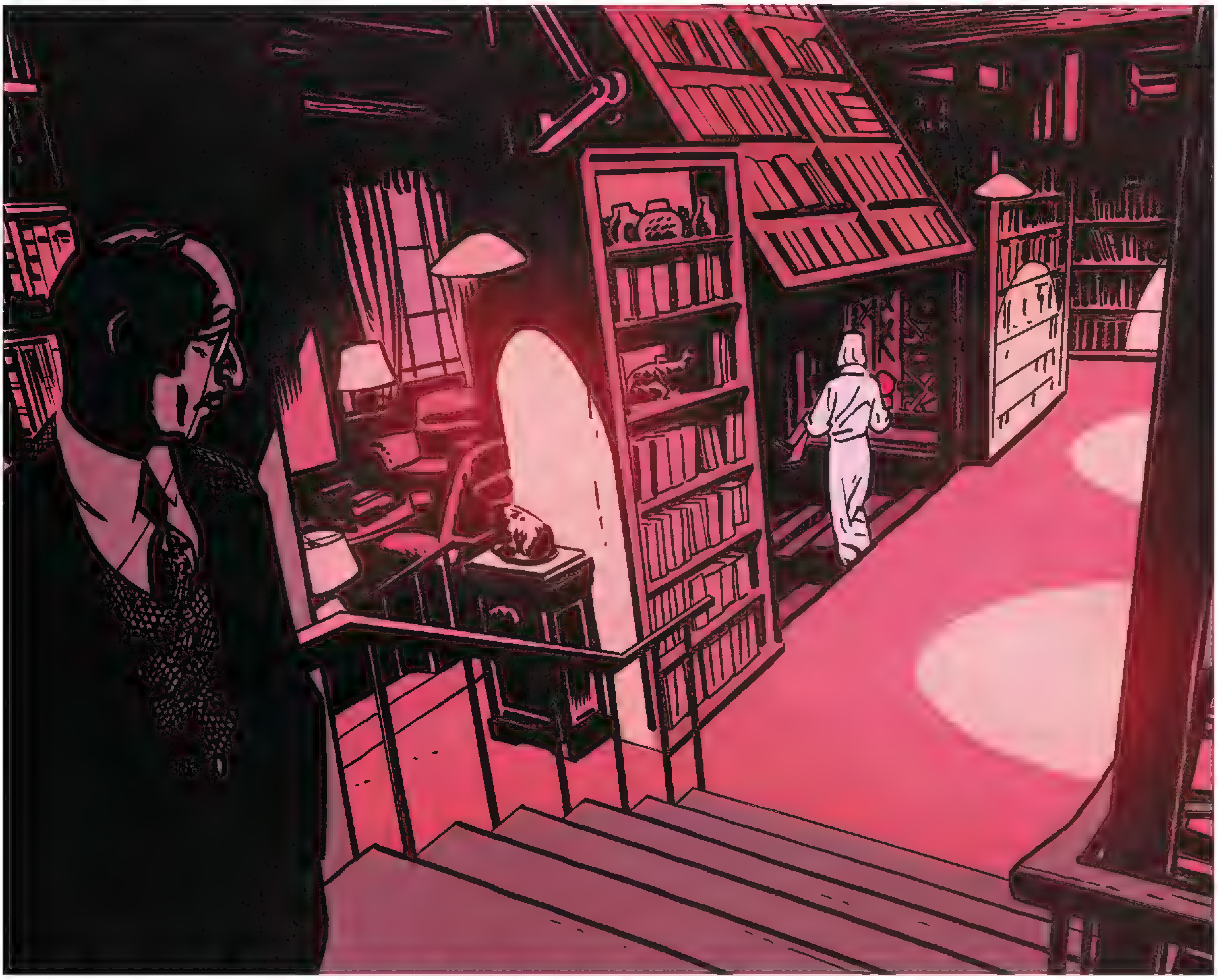
OSTANOVIS!
(YOU'RE A RAT LOOSE IN A DEADLY MAZE, WHOEVER YOU ARE! WHERE WILL YOU RUN TO?)
HKKKKT--!

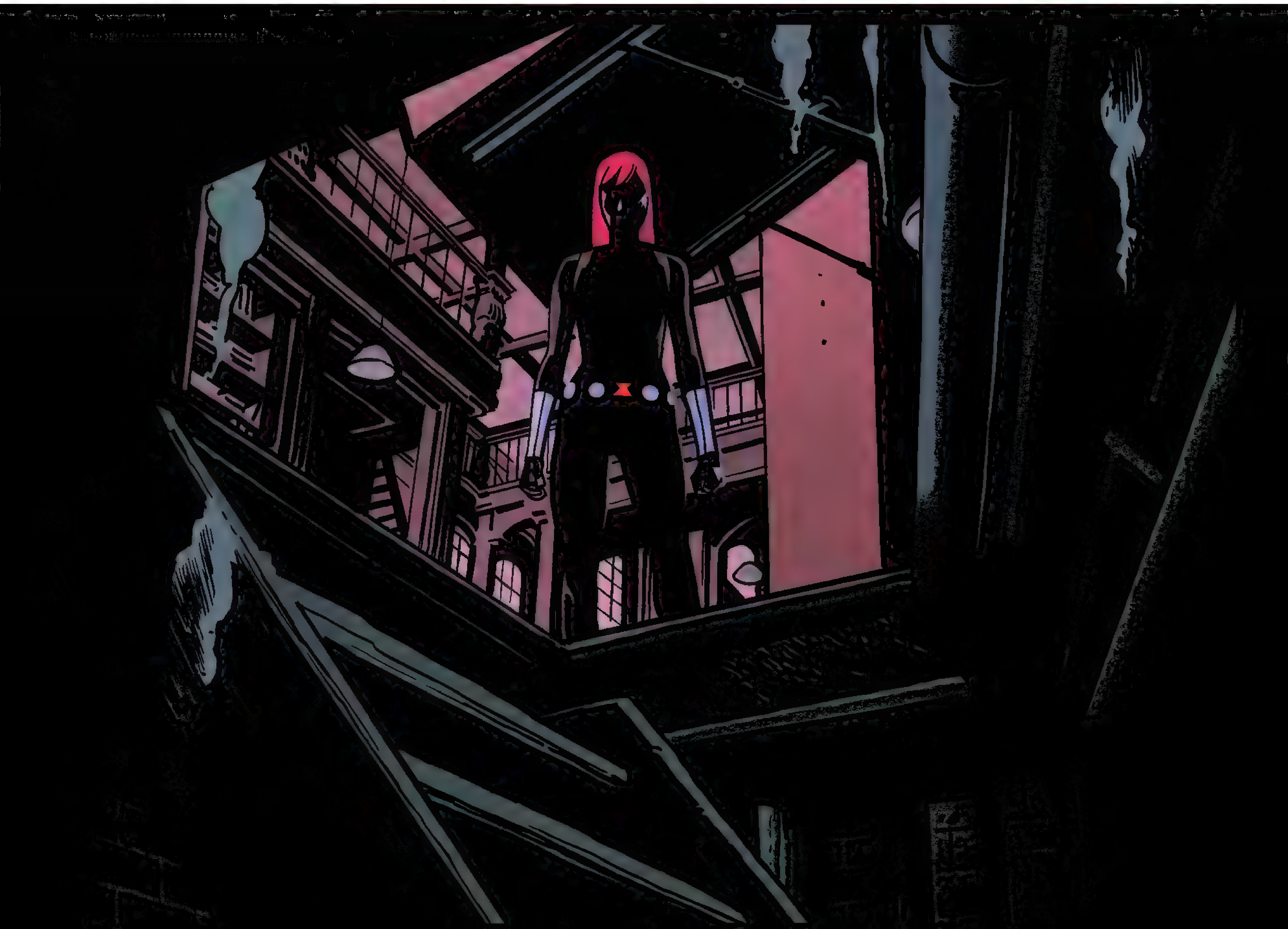
KRAK!






‹TEND TO THE GIRLS, DR. KOHN.›
‹TASHA AND I WILL BE IN THE *CATACOMBS.*›



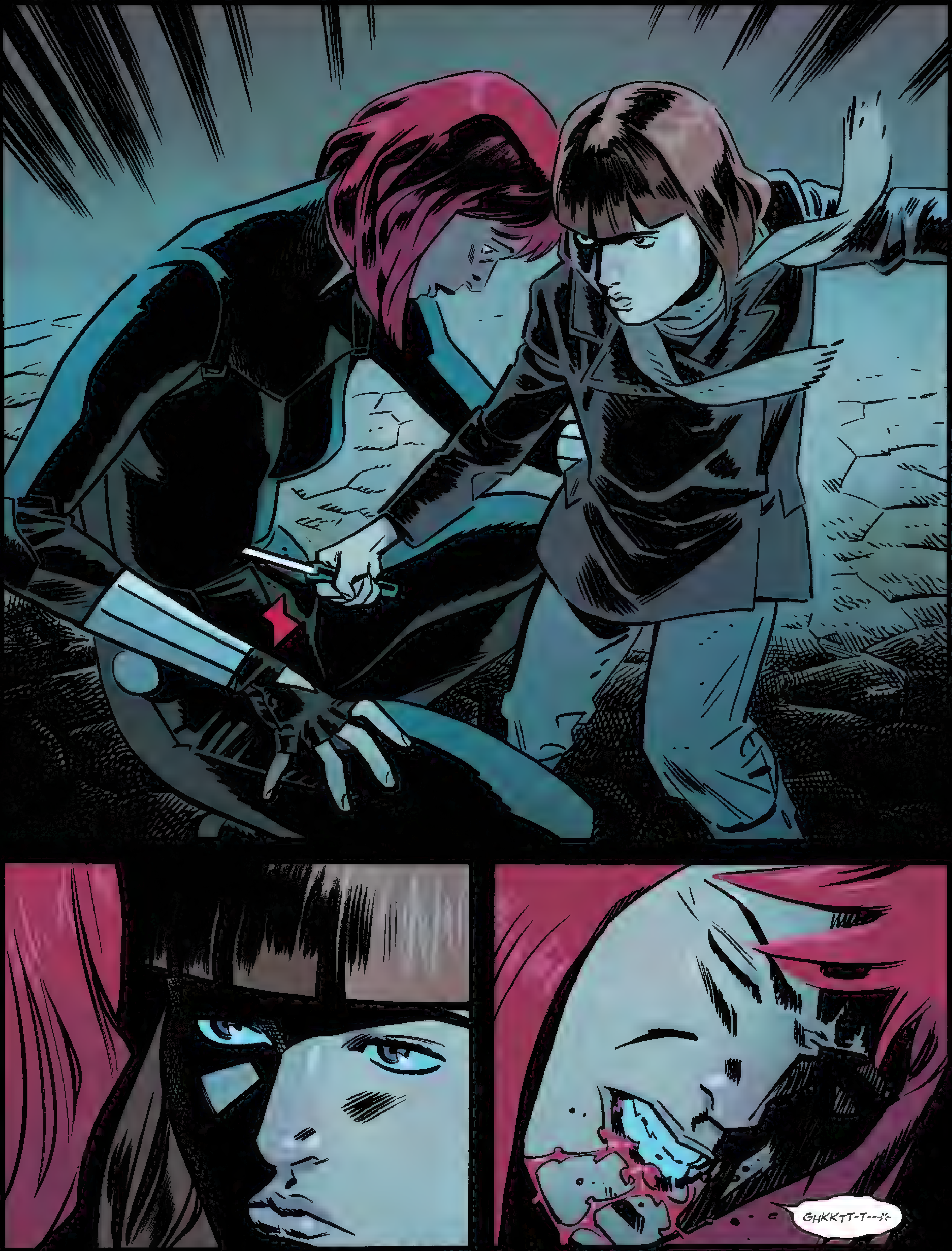


‹THIS WAS THE YUGOSLAVIAN'S WORK, YES? YOU FINISHED HIM WITHOUT YOUR HANDLER?
‹OF COURSE YOU DID. A KNIFE AS UNIQUE AS HIS LEAVES THIS: HIS SIGNATURE WOUND...›
‹...WHICH WOULD BE FAR CLEANER WERE HE NOT BREATHING HIS LAST, I'M SURE.›
‹DO NOT MISTAKE THAT FOR A COMPLIMENT. YOU WERE STUPID TO VENTURE OUT ALONE THIS EARLY IN YOUR TRAINING, AND THERE WILL BE CONSEQUENCES.
‹CONSIDER YOURSELF LUCKY THAT YOU'RE AROUND TO FACE THEM. IT'S A WONDER YOU'RE STILL ALIVE. A MIRACLE YOU MADE IT BACK.
‹ONE... LAST... STITCH...
‹THERE. IT WILL SCAR, WHICH IS GOOD.›
‹A SCAR IS NOT THE MARK OF A MISTAKE MADE, NATASHA.›
‹IT'S ANOTHER LESSON--›

‹--THAT YOU ARE STRONGER THAN WHATEVER IT IS THAT GAVE IT TO YOU.›
‹YOU WILL ENDURE MANY SUCH LESSONS IN YOUR LIFE, LITTLE SPIDER.›
‹NOT ALL OF THEM WILL BE FROM ENEMIES.›
‹NOW YOU KNOW HOW TO KNIT A WOUND. I WILL NOT DEMONSTRATE AGAIN. ALLOWING YOU DOWN HERE WAS A RARE PRIVILEGE THAT WILL NOT BE REPEATED. UNDERSTOOD?›
‹GOOD.›

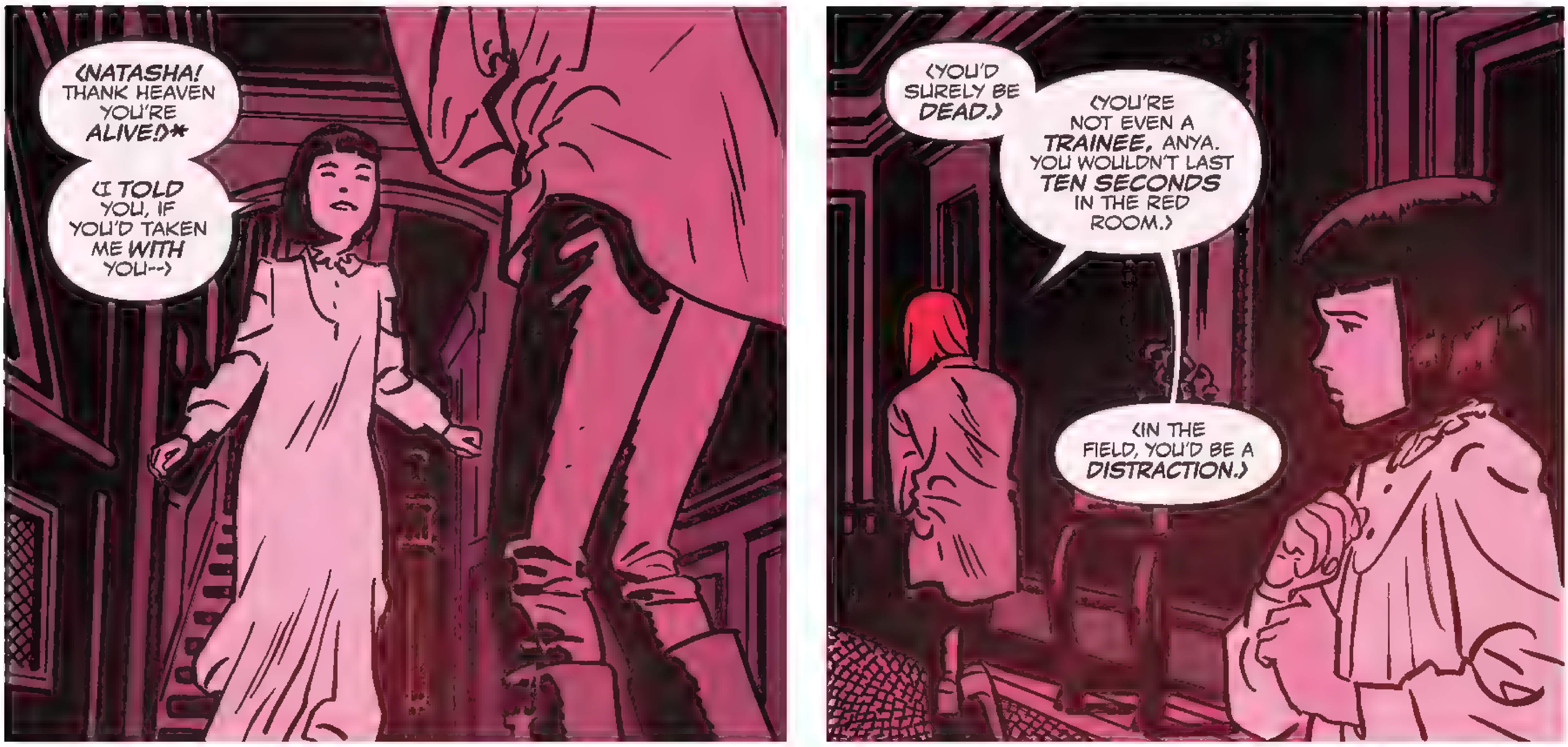
‹REST FOR A MOMENT. DO NOT TARRY.›
‹LOCK THE DOOR BEHIND YOU AS YOU LEAVE.›

THUNK

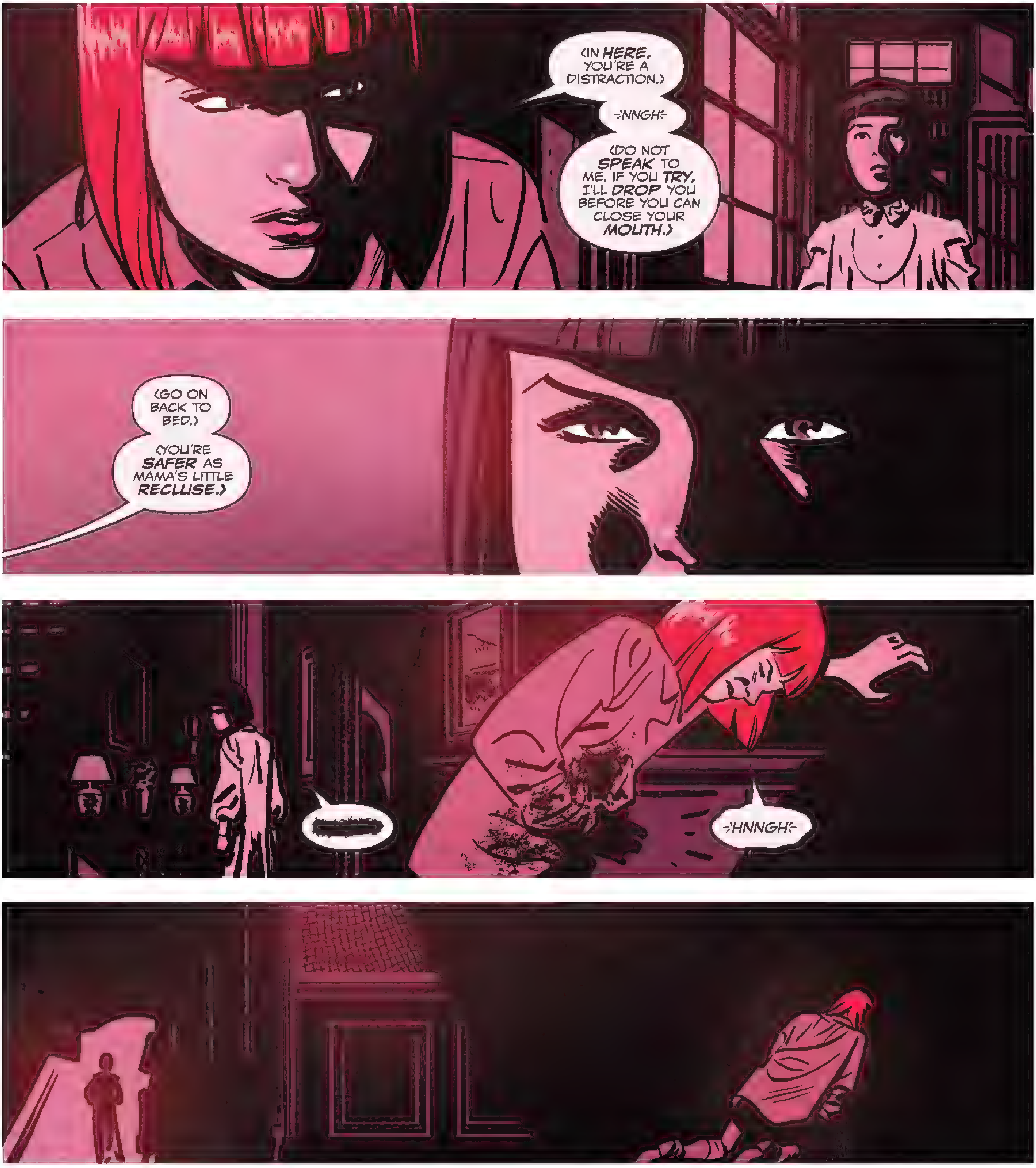

GHKKTT-T--*

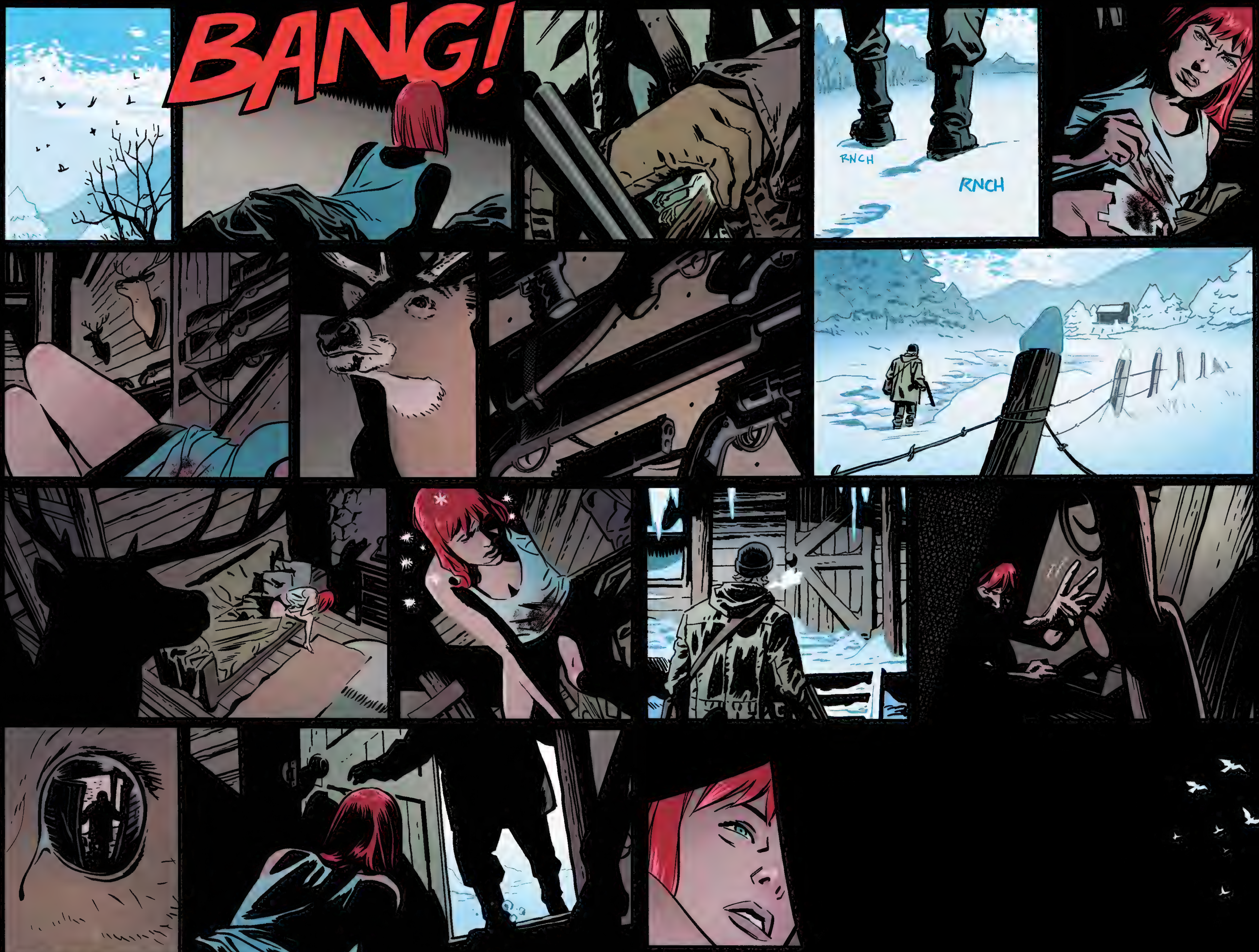
4

THEN.


‹NATASHA! THANK HEAVEN YOU'RE ALIVE!›*
‹I TOLD YOU, IF YOU'D TAKEN ME WITH YOU--›
‹YOU'D SURELY BE DEAD.›
‹YOU'RE NOT EVEN A TRAINEE, ANYA. YOU WOULDN'T LAST TEN SECONDS IN THE RED ROOM.›
‹IN THE FIELD, YOU'D BE A DISTRACTION.›

*TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN.


‹IN HERE, YOU'RE A DISTRACTION.›
-NNGH-
‹DO NOT SPEAK TO ME. IF YOU TRY, I'LL DROP YOU BEFORE YOU CAN CLOSE YOUR MOUTH.›
‹GO ON BACK TO BED.›
‹YOU'RE SAFER AS MAMA'S LITTLE RECLUSE.›
-HNNGH-


BANG!
RNCH
RNCH

BANG
-KOFF-
...WHY...
...WHY ARE YOU STARING AT ME WHEN YOU COULD BE SHARING SOME OF THAT FOUL-SMELLING COFFEE...?
AND GOOD AFTERNOON TO YOU.
HOW ARE YOU FEELING, LITTLE NATASHA? YOU'VE BEEN OUT FOR THREE DAYS. ANY INTERESTING DREAMS?
DREAMS ARE FOR THE WEAK, IOSEF. COFFEE.

-SSSSS-
TENDER. I REMEMBER YOU BEING BETTER AT SUTURING.
THESE OLD HANDS AREN'T AS STEADY AS THEY USED TO BE.
MOST OF US CAN'T HIT SNOOZE ON THE RAVAGES OF TIME.
YOU'RE WELCOME, BY THE WAY.
IOSEF--
STOP.
DON'T SQUANDER YOUR ENERGY ON PLEASANTRIES.
I WON'T RECOGNIZE YOU.

I NEVER MEANT TO--
YOU LEFT ONCE I'D TAUGHT YOU ALL I *COULD.* THAT IS THE *WAY* OF OUR KIND.
HERE'S WHAT I KNOW: THE *DAUGHTER* OF YOUR OLD *HEADMISTRESS* HAS CREATED A *NEW VERSION* OF THE RED ROOM.
I'VE NO CLUE WHERE SHE'S GETTING HER *FUNDING,* BUT THERE'S NO GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT *WHATSOEVER.*
AND THE LITTLE GIRL WHO *GUTTED* ME?
SAID TO BE THE FIRST RECRUIT OF THIS *"DARK ROOM."*
SHE'S BEING TRAINED TO BE A *NEW* TYPE OF WIDOW.
AND EVEN AT HER TENDER AGE, FROM THE LOOKS OF HER HANDIWORK, I'D SAY SHE'S WELL ON HER *WAY.*
WHERE *IS* THIS "DARK ROOM"?
FAR ENOUGH OUT WHERE THEY'VE NOT NOTICED ME--
--BUT CLOSE ENOUGH WHERE I CAN KEEP AN EYE ON THEM.
CLOSE ENOUGH WHERE THEY CAN *FIND* ME IF THEY'RE LOOKING FOR YOU--
--WHICH THEY MOST CERTAINLY *ARE.*

IF I KNOW YOU, YOU'RE ARMED TO THE TEETH AND YOU HAVE EYES ALL AROUND.
I'M OFF MY GAME. I RETIRED AFTER--
--WELL, YOU KNOW.
BESIDES, I'M ON THE LIST.
THE ONE I WAS SENT TO FIND.
ALL KNOWN ASSOCIATES OF THE ORIGINAL RED ROOM PROGRAM. ALL ITS STUDENTS, ALL ITS TEACHERS.
ANYONE WHO COULD POSSIBLY BE A... COMPLICATION FOR THEM. WHO PUT YOU ONTO THIS?
HE CALLS HIMSELF THE WEEPING LION. HE'S ATTEMPTING TO BLACKMAIL ME INTO SERVITUDE.
I'VE BEEN PLAYING ALONG WITH HIM UNTIL I COULD GET A SENSE OF HIS ENDGAME, BUT I CAN'T AFFORD TO FAIL.
I'LL RETRIEVE THE LIST.
HOW DID YOU COME BY THESE CLOTHES?
YOU THINK YOU'RE THE FIRST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN TO SEE THE INSIDE OF THIS CABIN?
MAYBE THE FIRST TO LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO TELL THE TALE.
THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN.
I APPRECIATE THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.

YOU'RE THE RED ROOM'S **FINEST GRADUATE.** WE ALL KNEW YOU **WOULD** BE.
BUT WHAT THIS **NEW** GROUP HAS IN MIND FOR ITS STUDENTS...IT FEELS LIKE SOMETHING ELSE **ENTIRELY.**
IT'S STILL BRAINWASHING CHILDREN TO BE KILLERS.
THAT'S ALL I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR GOALS.
WHAT CAN YOU ARM ME WITH?
NOTHING FANCY. IN FACT, MOST OF THIS ORDNANCE BELONGS IN A MUSEUM.
A QUITE AWESOME MUSEUM.
BUT IT'S ALL **MAINTAINED,** AND IT PUTS YOU AT AN **ADVANTAGE.**
YOU'RE **JOKING.**
NOT AT **ALL.** THEY'RE **PREPARED** AGAINST **CUTTING-EDGE** SPYCRAFT. NOT **OLD-SCHOOL.**
THIS ISN'T FROM THE **OLD SCHOOL,** IOSEF.
IT'S FROM THE SCHOOL THEY TORE **DOWN** TO **BUILD** THE OLD SCHOOL.
I'VE NOT TRAINED WITH **ANY** OF THIS.
WE HAVE AT LEAST A DAY.
-SIGH-
VERY WELL. SHOW ME.

12 HOURS LATER.
YOU CATCH ON QUICK AS EVER, DEAR.
SEE HOW PAINLESS THAT WAS?
IN OUR LINE OF WORK, IT'S BEST TO RELY ON THE SIMPLE TOOLS. **GIZMOS** ARE FOR **AMATEURS.**
I KNOW SOME AVENGERS WHO'D DISAGREE.
PFAH. AVENGERS. SHOWBOATS IN COSTUMES ARE **BENEATH** YOU, NAT.
YOU WERE MADE FOR ESPIONAGE.
MADE ALMOST FROM **BIRTH.**
WELCOME BACK TO THE COLD.
CHARMER.
THROW ANOTHER LOG ON. IF I'M NOT BACK BY DAYBREAK, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN.
AS EVER.
GOOD LUCK, NAT.
YOU'LL NEED IT.

WELL, DAMN.

CHK
?
SHNK

JACKPOT.

5264

‹IF YOU'D STAYED WITH ME, YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE HAD TO BREAK INSIDE.›*
‹TCH, TCH, TCH.›
‹WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG, MS. ROMANOFF?›
*TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN.
‹WHO...?›
‹HEADMISTRESS?›
‹REMEMBER WHAT I ALWAYS TAUGHT YOU ABOUT TIME.›
‹IT IS THE ENEMY OF ALL LIVING THINGS.›
‹THE YEARS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN KIND TO YOU, OF COURSE.›
‹UNTIL NOW.›

‹SAY HELLO TO MY NEW LITTLE SPIDER.›
‹ANYA?›
‹MAMA'S LITTLE **RECLUSE** STILL SCUTTLES ABOUT IN THE ***SHADOWS?***›
‹NO ONE IS ***HIDING,*** NATASHA.›
‹AND I NO LONGER "BELONG" TO MOTHER.›
‹SHE WORKS FOR ***ME*** NOW.›
‹GROWING UP, SHE DID NOT ALLOW ME TO TRAIN WITH THE REST OF YOU. I HAVE...ENCOURAGED HER TO MAKE... ***REPARATIONS*** ON THAT FRONT.›
‹WE ARE ***PHYSICAL EQUALS*** NOW, YOU AND I, NATASHA.›

‹NOT QUITE.›
‹THE MOMENT I SAW YOU ON THE MONITORS, NATASHA, IT WAS OBVIOUS.›
... ‹WHAT?›
‹YOU'RE STILL *AILING* FROM YOUR ENCOUNTER WITH OUR LITTLE *PHASE ONE* TEST SUBJECT.›
‹IF YOU REALLY WISH TO PROVE YOURSELF, ANYA, I SUGGEST YOU WAIT UNTIL YOUR OPPONENT IS FULLY HEALED.›
‹BUT--›
‹IT'S UP TO *YOU,* MY RECLUSE. IT'S SIMPLY THAT IT IS NO *VICTORY* TO BEST A HOBBLED *FOE.*›
‹SHALL I...?›
‹THE *FILES* SHE HUNTS? HAND THEM OVER. I'VE NO OBJECTION.›
‹WE'VE ALL WE *NEED* FROM THEM. THEY'RE OF NO USE TO *US.* BUT IF THEY CAN KEEP *HER* ALIVE LONG ENOUGH TO PROVE A TRUE *CHALLENGE...*›
‹...THEN BY ALL MEANS, LET THE BABY HAVE HER *BOTTLE.*›
‹SHE *WILL* RETURN SOMEDAY, ANYA.›
‹I'M *COUNTING* ON IT.›
‹SEE YOU *SOON,* NATASHA.›

I'VE RECOVERED THE REQUESTED INTEL.
GIVE ME A TIME AND PLACE FOR THE *TRANSFER.*

SAMNEE '16
MW

5

I'VE GOT EYES ON ROMANOV, LION.
NO CATSUIT, BUT WE'VE STUDIED THE BODY LANGUAGE. YOU TOLD US HOW SHE TAKES HER COFFEE.
AND EVERYONE KNOWS THAT FACE. A LIABILITY FOR A SPY. OUR MEN WON'T HAVE ANY TROUBLE RECOGNIZING HER.
BLACK WIDOW
SHE'S IN MY LINE, TOO, SIR, BUT-- DID YOU SEND A DIFFERENT COURIER?
I DON'T RECOGNIZE THIS ONE.
I SEE.
THEN STRIKE ON MY SIGNAL.

KEEP ME INFORMED.

clink
YOU'RE DMITRI, I TAKE IT? YOU'RE HERE ON BEHALF OF THE LION?
I DON'T FEEL SAFE MAKING THE DROP HERE. LET'S MOVE.
UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, WE HAVE A S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENT ON OUR TAIL.

S.H.I.E.L.D.'S GOOD.
NO, I'M JUST PREOCCUPIED.
THE PHONER IN THE BLUE SWEATER? THAT'S TWO.
JUST KEEP WALKING. I HAVE A DESTINATION IN MIND.
PRIVATE. JUST THE TWO OF US, NO ONE ELSE AROUND.
MUST BE ONE HELL OF A PACKAGE YOU'RE HANDING OVER. YOU DO HAVE IT, YES?
WHO AM I, HAWKEYE? OF COURSE I DO.
I'M SURPRISED THE LION DIDN'T TELL YOU WHAT TO EXPECT.
HE SAYS HE'S CONFIDENT YOU'LL PLAY STRAIGHT WITH HIM.
NOW THAT YOU'VE BETRAYED S.H.I.E.L.D., YOU NEED SOMEONE IN YOUR CORNER, RIGHT?

S.H.I.E.L.D.
THEIR AGENTS HAVE NO CLUE HOW HARD I WORK TO KEEP THEM *SAFE.*
YOU *RAIDED* THEIR *HELICARRIER.*
I *OBTAINED* CLASSIFIED *INTEL* AT THE REQUEST OF *YOUR BOSS.*
...
HE MUST HAVE ONE HELL OF A *HOLD* OVER YOU.
YOU'D BE GENUINELY SURPRISED.
BE SURE TO TELL YOUR *BOSS* THAT.
?
I'M SURE HE'S *AWARE.*
HOLD UP, COWBOY.
ARE WE *MADE?* WHY DO I SUDDENLY FEEL LIKE A LAMB TO--
BANG!

GET DOWN!
DAMN IT. GUT SHOT, BUT TOO FAR TO THE LEFT TO BE FATAL.
I'VE GOT ONE H.E. ROUND LEFT--
--THEN IT'S UP TO THE GROUND CREW.
AGENT, WE STAY HERE, WE'RE PINNED.
YOU... KNEW...
...KNEW I WAS S.H.I.E.L.D.? HOW...?
I'M VERY GOOD.
AND I WANTED TO LEAD YOU OUT OF HARM'S WAY. SO FAR, THAT PART ISN'T GOING SO--
KEWHAM!

KSSH
-KAFF-
ALL RIGHT. GET READY TO RUN.
I... I CAN'T...
I DIDN'T MEAN ON FOOT.
THAK
SHNK
VRRRROOOOOMMMNN

...PATIENCE...
THERE MUST BE SOME NEWS.
I'M SORRY, WEEPING LION, THERE HAVE BEEN SOME... SETBACKS...
COME FORWARD.
CONFESS YOUR FAILURES.

CHAK
BRAKKA AKKAACK
PTANG
BRAKKA BRAKKA BR
SVOLOCHI--!
THEY'RE 360! TELL ME YOU'RE CARRYING!
BRAK
RAKKA BRAKKA
...
NO.

PARKIN
SKRRCH

FRNNCHRCH
SSHNK
SKREEEE
SKEEE-EEEE
VVRRRRRRNNNNNN
SKRRNTCH!
VVRRRR
VRRRR
CHK
CHAK

HANG ON!
TO WHAT?
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

HWHUH!
HFFF! HFFF!
GOD... ...THAT HURT...
YOU'RE... -KAFF- YOU'RE COMPLAINING?
...DROPPED... MY PIECE... NNGH!
WAIT. YOU HAD A--

HEY, ROMANOV! WHO YOU GOT RIDING SHOTGUN HERE?
BETTER GET HIM A CORK. LOOKS LIKE HE'S SPRUNG A LEAK.
SERIOUSLY, HOW FAR DID YOU THINK YOU COULD GET? THE LION HAS MEN POSTED ON EVERY STREET CORNER IN A FIVE-BLOCK RADIUS.
HE'S A MIGHTY LION. YOU'RE AN ITSY-BITSY SPIDER. YOU'RE NOT GONNA WIN A FIGHT.
LET HIM GO.
THESE FILES YOU HAVE MUST BE MUY IMPORTANTE. FORK 'EM OVER.
ESE OU HAVE BE MUY TANTE. K 'EM ER.
WIDOW...
...SHOW ME YOU'RE STILL ON OUR SIDE
QUIET!

WELL?
WIDOW... SHOW ME...
SHUT UP, HOSTAGE MEAT!
TICK-TOCK, RED!
...THEY SAY...YOU'RE A TRAITOR, WIDOW...
...WALK AWAY AND PROVE IT...
NOT PLAYING. LAST CHANCE. FILES.
SEE, OLD MAN? SHE WASN'T GONNA LET YOU DIE.
SWIKT
SHE JUST DIDN'T WANT TO GIVE UP HER INTEL! SHE IS ON YOUR SIDE!
YEAH. SO IF WE CAN'T HAVE IT--
--NO ONE CAN!

WHAMP

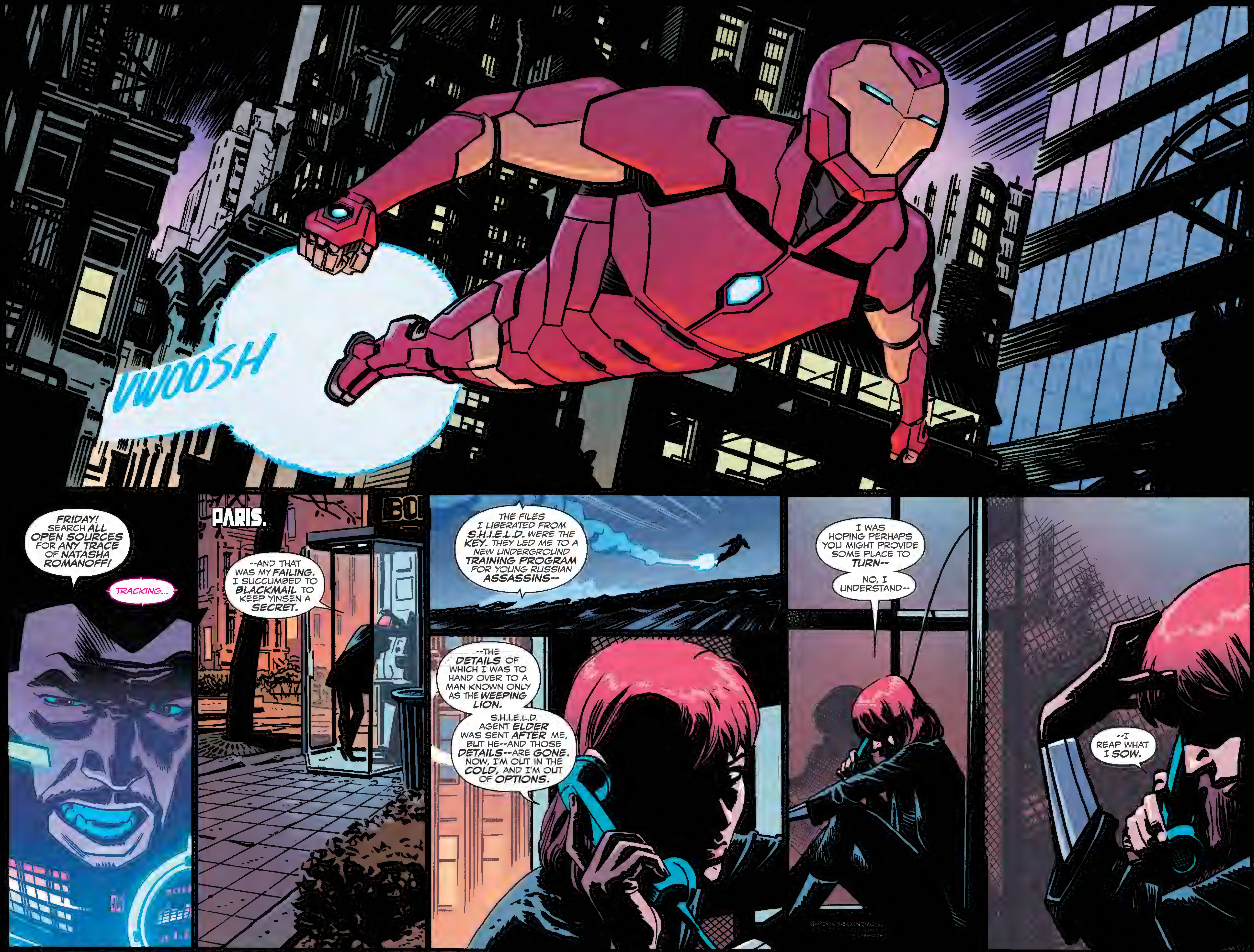
NOW SHE BURNS.
SHE KNEW THE CONSEQUENCES IF THOSE FILES DIDN'T MAKE THEIR WAY BACK HERE.
NOW WE BROADCAST HER BIGGEST, DARKEST SECRET THROUGH EVERY MEDIA OUTLET ON THE PLANET.
THERE WILL BE MANY, MANY PEOPLE FOR WHOM THAT INFORMATION WILL BE QUITE DEVASTATING--

"--STARTING WITH *TONY STARK.*"
20
TARGET:
BLACK WIDOW
01
00

SAMNEE '16
MW

6

--THAT'S CORRECT, LISA. AND LET ME STATE **AGAIN,** FOR **EMPHASIS**--
--THAT AGENT ROMANOFF, KNOWN TO MOST AS THE FORMER AVENGER **BLACK WIDOW,** NO LONGER HAS **ANY** TIES WITH **S.H.I.E.L.D.**
THANK YOU, COMMANDER CARTER. WE'LL BE BACK AFTER THE BREAK.
YOU'RE LISTENING TO WNYX NEWS RADIO, WHERE WE'VE JUST BEEN INFORMED BY MULTIPLE RELIABLE SOURCES--
--OF VARIOUS HERETOFORE-UNKNOWN ACTS OF **ESPIONAGE** UNDERTAKEN BY THE WIDOW BEFORE DEFECTING TO THE **WEST.**
THE **BIGGEST** BOMBSHELL REVEALED TO US IS THAT THE BLACK WIDOW WAS A **KEY PLAYER** SOME YEARS AGO IN THE ABDUCTION OF--LET ME GET THIS NAME RIGHT--
CHNK
--PROFESSOR **HO YINSEN**--
--THE SCIENTIST WHO MADE **IRON MAN** POSSIBLE BY GIVING HIS **LIFE** TO SAVE **TONY STARK.**


VWOOSH
FRIDAY! SEARCH ALL OPEN SOURCES FOR ANY TRACE OF NATASHA ROMANOFF!
TRACKING...
PARIS.
BO
--AND THAT WAS MY FAILING. I SUCCUMBED TO BLACKMAIL TO KEEP YINSEN A SECRET.
THE FILES I LIBERATED FROM S.H.I.E.L.D. WERE THE KEY. THEY LED ME TO A NEW UNDERGROUND TRAINING PROGRAM FOR YOUNG RUSSIAN ASSASSINS--
--THE DETAILS OF WHICH I WAS TO HAND OVER TO A MAN KNOWN ONLY AS THE WEEPING LION.
S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENT ELDER WAS SENT AFTER ME, BUT HE--AND THOSE DETAILS--ARE GONE. NOW, I'M OUT IN THE COLD, AND I'M OUT OF OPTIONS.
I WAS HOPING PERHAPS YOU MIGHT PROVIDE SOME PLACE TO TURN--
NO, I UNDERSTAND--
--I REAP WHAT I SOW.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO.

‹...AND THIS MAN, YINSEN, IS YOUR TARGET, NATASHA.›
‹APPREHEND HIM AND PREPARE HIM FOR TRANSPORT TO THE LOCATION WE'VE PROVIDED YOU.›*
*TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN.
‹FOR THIS MISSION, YOU'LL BE PLAYING THE ROLE OF A WIFE IN MOURNING.›
‹YINSEN IS A VERY PRIVATE MAN. HE EMERGES VERY RARELY FROM HIS LABORATORY.›
‹THEN HOW DO YOU KNOW FOR CERTAIN HE'LL BE AT THIS PARTICULAR CEMETERY?›
‹HOW INDEED.›
‹WHO ASKED YOU, YOU PIG?›
‹NEVER MIND IVAN. HE'S MERELY PITCHING IN TO HELP WITH TRANSPORT. LET'S JUST SAY THAT WE'VE GIVEN HIM REASON TO BE THERE.›
‹CAN I COUNT ON YOU FOR THIS, CHILD?›
‹OF COURSE, HEADMISTRESS.›
‹EXCELLENT. A GENTLE TOUCH IS NEEDED FOR THIS ONE.›
‹REST ASSURED, YOU HAVE THE SUPPORT OF EVERYONE IN THE RED ROOM.›

PROFESSOR YINSEN?
WARLORD **WONG-CHU** REQUESTS THE PLEASURE OF YOUR **COMPANY.**

(DID YOU *FAIL?*)
(DON'T BE ABSURD.)
(THEN WHERE IS THE *PROFESSOR?*)
(UNCONSCIOUS, ALONG WITH HIS BODYGUARDS, WAITING FOR YOU TO RETRIEVE HIM. HE'S A LITTLE TOO *HEAVY* FOR MY SPRAINED *SHOULDER.*)
(SO HE'S *MY* PROBLEM.)
(YOU *WANTED* TO BE IN CHARGE OF TRANSPORT.)

HERE THEY COME, RIGHT ON SCHEDULE.
I EXPECT NO LESS FROM A RED ROOM OPERATIVE.
I'M TOLD YINSEN WILL BE OF *UNIMAGINABLE* BENEFIT TO WONG-CHU'S WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT...
...PROVIDED HE CAN BE PROPERLY... *MOTIVATED.*
NO... PLEASE... WONG-CHU'S A *MONSTER*... I--
DOSVEDANYA.
NO!
I--I HAVE A WIFE! A FAMILY! DON'T DO THIS--!
PLEASE

VWOOOSH
ROMANOFF!
I'LL HAVE TO CALL YOU BACK.
YOU'RE LOSING YOUR TOUCH, NATASHA.
AN UNENCRYPTED PAY PHONE? AMATEUR HOUR.
TELL ME THIS YINSEN THING ISN'T TRUE. TELL ME. BECAUSE IF IT IS--
YEAH. AN OLD FLAME JUST SHOWED UP TO KICK MY ASS.
IT'S BEEN THAT KIND OF A DAY.

GOOD LORD, ROMANOFF.
APPARENTLY, WHATEVER I WAS PLANNING TO DO TO YOU WOULD BE **REDUNDANT.**
DO YOU NEED HELP UP?
WHAT I NEED IS A BOTTLE OF 18-YEAR-OLD MACALLAN.
ANYTHING ELSE?
A BIG GLASS.
TELL YOU WHAT.
THERE'S A STARK OFFICE A COUPLE OF BLOCKS FROM HERE. WE CAN GO THERE AND YOU CAN EXPLAIN YOURSELF...
...AND TRY TO CONVINCE ME YOU WEREN'T RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF THE MAN I OWE ***EVERYTHING*** TO.

OPTICAL SCAN AND VOICE PRINT REQUIRED.
LE KNOCK KNOCK.
ACCEPTED.
WELCOME BACK, MR. STARK.
A CHANGE OF ATTIRE, SIR?
OUI.
NOTHING FOR ME?
WHAT YOU'RE WEARING ISN'T PROGRAMMED TO MOLECULARLY REARRANGE.
STOP STARING. I KNOW I LOOK DASHING.
BESIDES, IT'S NIGHTTIME IN PARIS. WHAT AM I, A FARMER?
WELL?
IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO, TONY. I WAS A DIFFERENT WOMAN.
OH, I REMEMBER. YOU SENT THE CRIMSON DYNAMO AFTER ME.
YOU DROPPED A BUILDING ON ME WITH AN ANTI-GRAVITY RAY.
AND I DON'T EVEN WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE PATH YOU SENT HAWKEYE DOWN BEFORE HE TURNED INTO A GOOD GUY.
AND OVER THE YEARS, I HAVE FORGIVEN ALL THAT.
THIS IS A WHOLE DIFFERENT MATTER.

I REALIZE THAT.
THAT'S WHY I NEVER TOLD YOU.
YINSEN MEANT A *LOT* TO YOU.
HE MEANT A LOT TO THE *WORLD,* NATASHA.
HE WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST MINDS OF HIS GENERATION.
I DIDN'T KNOW HIM FOR *LONG*--
--WE WERE HELD CAPTIVE AND EXPLOITED BY WONG-CHU FOR ONLY A FEW *WEEKS*--
--BUT IT WAS *OBVIOUS* TO ME THAT HIS *GENIUS* COULD HAVE CHANGED MANKIND FOR THE *BETTER* IN WAYS REED RICHARDS OR BANNER OR I WILL *NEVER* ACHIEVE.
HE HELPED ME BUILD THE FIRST *IRON MAN* SUIT TO KEEP ME *ALIVE* WHILE HE WAS MOWED DOWN BY THE *TERRORISTS* TO WHOM, IF ALL THIS IS *ACCURATE,* YOU *DELIVERED* HIM.
I REGRET THAT.
YOU *"REGRET"*--?
SO IT *IS* TRUE?
AAAAH!
... SUDDENLY, I'M PUNCHING DOWN.
IT'S FINE.
'TASHA--
I SAID, IT'S *FINE.* IS THERE SOMEWHERE I CAN SIT DOWN FOR A BIT?

I HAVE A PULLOUT SOFA IN MY OFFICE FOR... SLEEPOVERS.
NATURALLY.
PARISIAN WOMEN, NATASHA. THEY APPRECIATE A NICE TUXEDO. HARDLY MY FAULT.
ONE MOMENT, SIR. PLEASE APPROVE BODY SCANS BEFORE PROCEEDING.
PERVERT.
IT'S TO SCREEN OUT THE SEXY ASSASSINS HIDING WEAPONS, OKAY? YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD APPRECIATE THAT.
BEEP
SCANNING COMPLETE. YOU MAY ENTER.
FULL BIOSCAN, SEE?
HUH. THAT'S STRANGE.
IT SHOULD BE HIGHLIGHTING YOUR WOUNDS, BUT ALL IT SHOWS IS A FEW MINOR SCRAPES--
ZZK
KK
KKKKTTT--!
MAKEUP AND ACTING, TONY.
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN A SUCKER FOR BOTH.
THANKS FOR THE ACCESS.

"AMATEUR HOUR," HE SAYS.
LIKE I DIDN'T KNOW HE COULD TRACK A **PAY PHONE** CALL.
RIGHT NOW, THERE'S A RANDOM PERSON IN THE 212 AREA CODE BAFFLED BY AN EXTREMELY LONG **VOICE MAIL.**
STARK INTERNATIONAL
STARK INTERNATIONAL
STARK
SALES RECORDS QTR 4...
SEARCHING SERIAL NUMBER 052535786...
SHIPPING ADDRESS:

KRK
DING DONG

YOU'RE CARELESS WITH YOUR ADDRESS, PLATCH LIEV.
WHEN YOU HAD ME CAPTIVE, I NOTICED SOME STARK SHIPPING CRATES. I MEMORIZED THE SERIAL NUMBER ON ONE.
CHKCHKKT
ZZZZZ
ZZZT

STOP
DON'T HURT MY BROTHER.
AND YOU ARE...?
THE BRAINS BEHIND THE MUSCLE. THE MASTERMIND BEHIND THE DECOY FRONT.
MY NAME IS ILIJA KNEZEVIC. THE TRUE WEEPING LION.
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING.
NO. I MEAN IT. I'M NOT EXAGGERATING.
I LITERALLY KNOW WHAT'S IN YOUR HEAD, NATASHA ROMANOFF.
I'M A TELEPATH.

THIS IS POWER, WIDOW. **THIS** IS **CONTROL.**
I COLLECT **SECRETS** AND **WEAPONIZE** THEM. CALL ME THE **ANTI-SNOWDEN,** I SUPPOSE.
I DON'T GATHER INTEL FOR **TRANSPARENCY,** TO EXPOSE THE **BAD GUYS.**
I DO IT TO **MANIPULATE.** TO ALWAYS MAKE SURE THE CARDS ARE STACKED IN MY **FAVOR.**
BUT YOU COULDN'T GET TO THE **HEADMISTRESS** OF THE **RED ROOM** TO FIND DETAILS ON HER ADOLESCENT-TERRORIST PROGRAM.
SO YOU GOADED **ME** INTO STEALING RECORDS. SORRY TO **DISAPPOINT.** YOU PLAYED YOUR **ACE.** NOW YOU HAVE NO MORE **HOLD** OVER ME.
OH, **DON'T I?** YOUR BRAIN IS **FULL** OF DARK KNOWLEDGE, NATASHA.
MY HOLD OVER YOU WILL **NEVER** CEASE.
ENOUGH.
I JUST STOLE INFORMATION FROM **IRON MAN.**
DO YOU THINK THAT'S **ALL** I STOLE?
IN FACT, I FOUND TWO MORE GADGETS OF INTEREST. AN **EARPIECE** DESIGNED TO **PREVENT** INVASIONS OF THE MIND--
--AND **THIS.**
VVVVVVV

KSHH
NO ONE PLAYS ME, "LION."
THAT'S NO SECRET.
NO ONE GETS INTO MY HEAD UNLESS I LET THEM.
AND I RARELY LET THEM.
AND JUST SO WE UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER... HERE'S THE DEAL.
HKKKK!
YOU WORK FOR ME NOW.

NO MORE SECRETS
SAMNEE '16
MW

7

GREENLAND SEA BASE.
LISTEN CLOSELY TO MY EVERY INSTRUCTION, OR YOU WILL BE MORE *WEEPING* THAN *LION.*
YOU PULLED SECRETS OUT OF MY *BRAIN* WITH YOUR TELEPATHY. I HAVE USE OF SUCH A SKILL.
IN THERE.
HOW *MANY* GUARDS ARE THERE?
NEVER ENOUGH.
THESE AREN'T THE DROIDS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.
THESE AREN'T THE DROIDS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.
THESE AREN'T THE DROIDS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING ON ABOUT?
US
JUST PRACTICING.
OY.

NATASHA ROMANOFF
FIRST KILL MISSION:
THE YUGOSLAVIAN
PAPA!
MAMA SAID **NOTHING** OF YOU BEING RELEASED **TODAY!**
WE WANTED TO KEEP IT A **SURPRISE.**
WHOA.
YOU **LIKE?** IT'S **BRAND NEW.** YOUR FATHER RIDES IN **STYLE.** **ALWAYS.**

YOU DESERVE IT. AFTER WHAT THOSE AWFUL MEN DID TO YOU...THE LIES THEY TOLD TO PUT YOU IN JAIL...
I'M SORRY. I SHOULDN'T DWELL.
ON THE CONTRARY.
KNOW THIS, YOU AND YOUR COUSIN BOTH: WHEN SOMEONE WRONGS YOUR FAMILY, REMEMBER IT. FOR WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND.
SOMEDAY, SOMEHOW, YOU WILL BE OFFERED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR VENGEANCE.
THE UNIVERSE IS SOMETIMES UNKIND, BUT BELIEVE ME...
...IT BENDS TOWARDS JUSTICE.

SHK
SHK
SHK
SHK
SHK
SHAK
SHUNK

HNNGH--!
SPRT
HKK-KK-T!
SHKT

HFFF
HFFF
NO...
...NO WITNESSES.
SHKT
ZZZZZ--
-YAWN-
UNCLE, ARE WE HOME Y--
?

--DISCOVERED HIM IN THE CAR NEXT TO HIS MURDERED FATHER, BARELY ALIVE--
--TOGETHER, WE WILL MAKE IT RIGHT, SOMEHOW--
--WE WILL FIND HIS KILLER--
--FOR WHAT GOES AROUND--
MISSIN
MISS
ISSING
ОТСУТСТВУЮЩ
--WORKED FOR MY UNCLE, ALL OF YOU.
NOW YOU WORK FOR ME--
--HERO KNOWN AS THE BLACK WIDOW--
VOLU
"HERO"?
PAUSE

THE WIDOW HAS BEEN CAPTURED. SHE IS EN ROUTE. IT IS *TIME,* COUSIN.
...
I CAN READ YOUR *MIND,* REMEMBER? I *KNOW* YOU'RE NERVOUS.
BUT JUSTICE IS FINALLY WITHIN OUR *GRASP.*
...
YES, I REALIZE IT'S *THEATRICAL,* THE MASK, THE APPROACH...
...BUT THIS WAY, WORKING AS *ONE,* WE *EACH* OBTAIN OUR FAIR SHARE OF *VENGEANCE.*
BETWEEN YOUR *BRAWN* AND MY *TALENTS,* WE WILL *GLEAN* THE WIDOW'S SECRETS--LET THEM *LOOSE*--
--AND *WATCH* AS THEY EAT HER *WHOLE.*

NOW...
...LET ME IN.
...
CLEARLY.
I WILL BE WITH YOU AT EVERY STEP, COUSIN...
...SEEING THROUGH YOUR EYES.

CHK
CHK
CHK
SO MUCH FOR MY **MEN.**
YOU DIDN'T EVEN BREAK A **SWEAT.**
IF YOU'VE INDEED **HEARD** OF ME, THEN YOU REALIZE THERE'S NO CHANCE OF ESCAPE.
PLP

?
HOW MANY AHEAD?
JUST THE ONE.
THEN WHAT'S TAKING SO LONG?
I'M PULLING THE ENTIRE BASE'S FLOOR PLAN FROM HIS BRAIN.
HNNNGHHH.
IT WOULD TAKE LESS TIME TO TORTURE IT OUT OF HIM.
NEVER USE A CHAINSAW WHEN A SCALPEL WILL DO.
NNNNAAAA.
GOT IT. THIRD FLOOR.
THEN WE MOVE ON.
RIGHT BEHIND YOU.
JUST A LITTLE MORE PLAYTIME...
NNNGH!
ANNGHHH!

REALLY? THAT'S WHERE YOU KEEP YOUR ONLINE PORN STASH?
WHAT'S THE PASSWORD?
RRRRGH!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "ABCDEF"? ARE YOU CRAZY?
HE'S A HUMAN BEING, NOT A TOY. LET'S GO.
HNNN...
OH, RELAX. YOU GET TO HAVE YOUR FUN. SO I GAVE HIM A HEADACHE, SO WH--
NNNYYYN--
SPLAPT
GRAAA--
C'MON. HE WAS A BAD GUY. CREEPY THOUGHTS.
CLIMBING THROUGH HIS MIND WAS LIKE WALKING THROUGH AN OIL SLICK. NO HARM DONE TO THE WORLD AT LARGE.

JUST KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN.
EXCELLENT ADVICE, LITTLE SPIDER.
HEADMISTRESS.
YOU'VE COME FOR THE CHILDREN UNDER MY TUTELAGE, I TRUST.
I'M IMPRESSED THAT YOU FOUND THE DARK ROOM EVEN AFTER WE MOVED IT HERE.
UNFORTUNATELY, YOU'RE TOO LATE. ITS TRAINEES HAVE ALREADY BEEN DISPATCHED ON THEIR VARIOUS MISSIONS.
WHERE?
WHERE HAVE THEY BEEN SENT--?
THAT'S CLOSE ENOUGH, DEAR.
OR WHAT? YOUR BONES ARE BRITTLE NOW, YOUR SKIN IS PAPER.
YOU'RE NO THREAT TO ME.
TRUE.
BUT I AM.
RECLUSE.
OF COURSE.
YOU NEVER DID UNTIE THOSE APRON STRINGS, DID YOU?

I'VE NO PATIENCE FOR THEATRICS AT THIS POINT.
I WANT TO KNOW WHERE THOSE GIRLS WERE SENT.
TEAR IT OUT OF HER.
YOU'RE THE BOSS.
? YOU BROUGHT ALONG A TELEPATH?
GET OUT--
NNHH!
--GET OUT OF MY MIND, YOU PUSTULANT LITTLE WORM--
NOT UNTIL I FIND MY INTEL.
NAT, KEEP RECLUSE AT BAY, 'KAY? SHE'S OUR ONLY THREAT--
--UH-OH.
I MUST KEEP MY SECRETS, TASHA, HOWEVER I CAN.
I'M FASTER THAN YOU EVER TRAINED ME TO BE, HEAD-MISTRESS.
WE BOTH KNOW I CAN SNAP YOUR FRAIL WRIST BEFORE YOU CAN PULL THAT TRIGGER.
WRONG.
BLAM

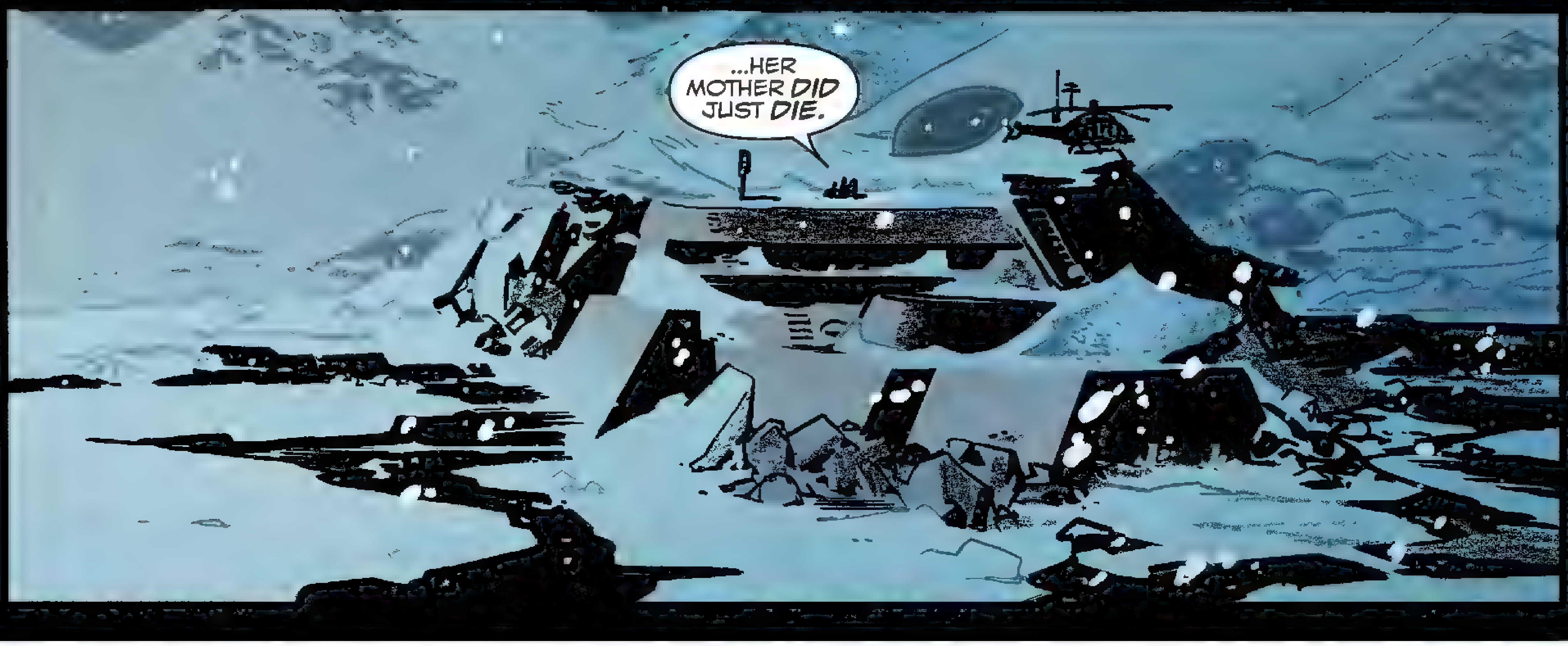
EVERYTHING SHE KNOWS--!
LION, SALVAGE WHAT YOU CAN! FIND THOSE GIRLS! HURRY!
--TRYING--!
GNNNNNNH!
IT'S... IT'S...
...IT'S ALL JUST FRAGMENTS. I GOT WHAT I COULD, BUT--
THEN WORK ON HER.
MOTHER... MOTHER, NO...!

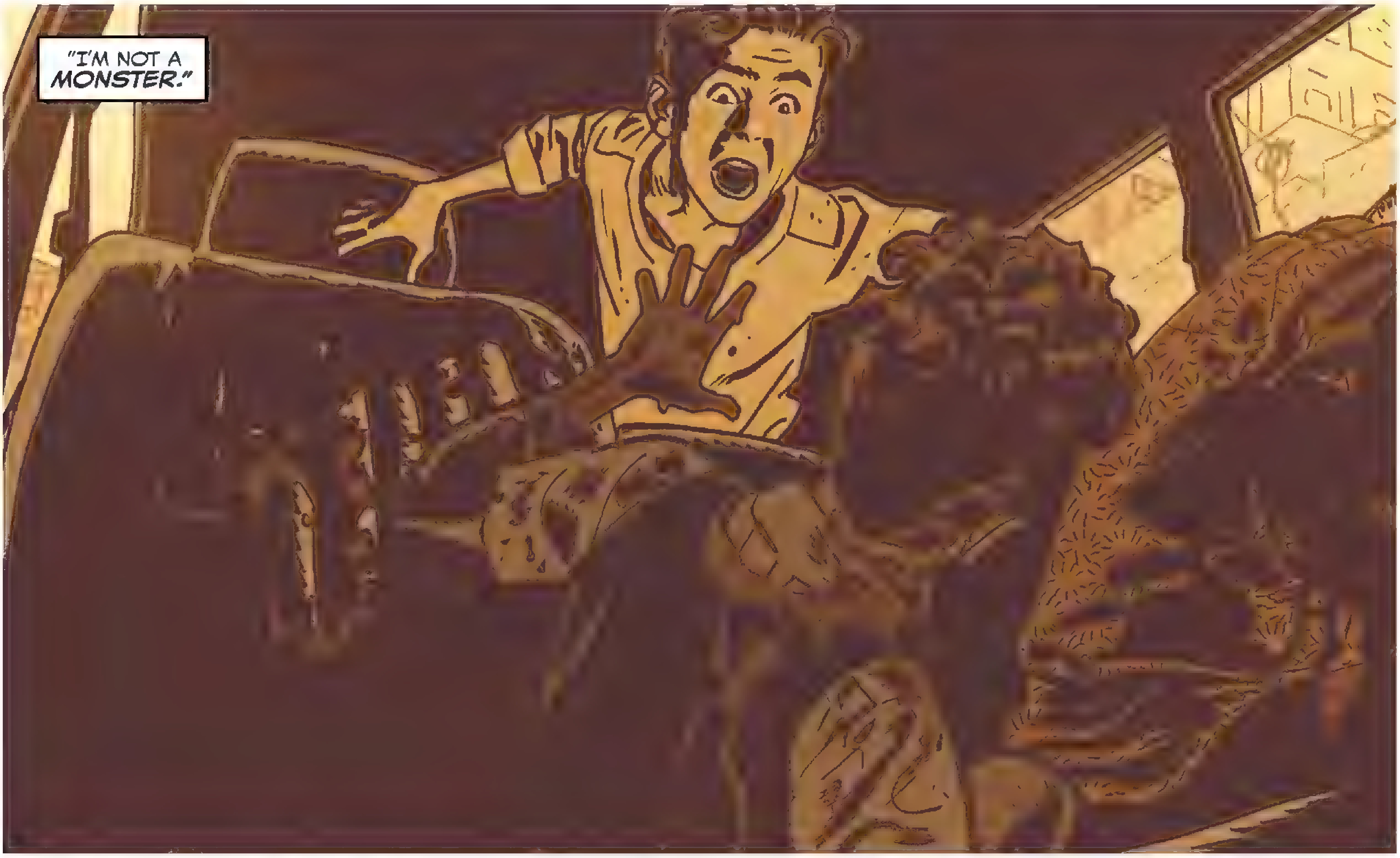
...
FINDING WHAT YOU'RE *LOOKING* FOR, YOU AWFUL LITTLE BOY?
GO AHEAD. YOU WON'T LEAVE THIS ROOM *ALIVE* WITH THE *INFORMATION.*
I...
WOW.
WHAT?
SHE...SHE KNOWS *NOTHING.* I MEAN, SHE *THINKS* SHE DOES, BUT--
WHAT?
--BUT THE HEADMISTRESS KEPT *EVERYTHING* FROM HER...
...AND SHE DOESN'T EVEN REALIZE IT.
SHE'S FULL TO THE *BRIM* WITH *COMBAT KNOWLEDGE.* THAT LEFT HER ROOM FOR ONLY ONE *MORE THOUGHT* IN HER *BRAIN,* AND WHAT A *KICKER:*
SHE'S ACTUALLY *AFRAID* OF YOU.
THAT'S A *LIE...!*

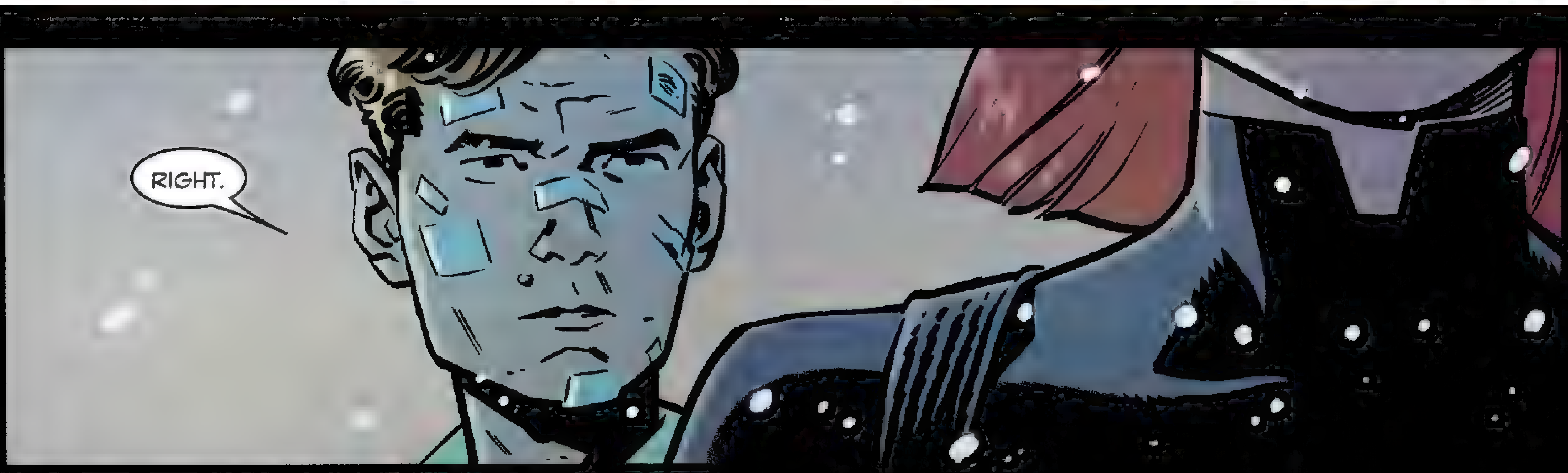
THAT'S A LIE!
YOUR MOTHER SHOWED ME LENIENCY ONCE UPON A TIME, RECLUSE.
IN HER MEMORY, PUT THE GUN DOWN NOW AND I MAY DO THE SAME FOR YOU.
WHY?
WHY DID MOTHER ALWAYS LOVE YOU MORE?
BECAUSE SHE RESPECTED ME.
SHE SAW IN ME THE WILL TO CONQUER MY FEARS WITHOUT DOUBTING MYSELF.
YOU NEVER HAD THAT.

IF YOU DID, YOU'D HAVE ALREADY PULLED THAT TRIGGER.
GOOD GIRL.
I PITY YOU.
YOU WASTED YOUR ENTIRE LIFE TRYING TO BE ME.
THAT WILL NEVER HAPPEN.
YOU'RE TOO WEAK.

SOMEDAY...
SOMEDAY, WHAT?
THEY'LL SING YOUR PRAISES? THEY'LL WRITE YOUR STORY?
YOU DON'T HAVE A STORY, LITTLE ONE.
YOU'RE SIMPLY A FOOTNOTE IN MINE.
DON'T YOU TURN YOUR BACK ON ME!
YOU'LL PAY FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE!
I SWEAR IT!
I'M SURE YOU DO.
LET ME KNOW HOW THAT GOES.
WANT ME TO JUST POP HER HEAD?
SHE ISN'T WORTH THE EFFORT. BESIDES...


...HER MOTHER *DID* JUST *DIE.*


"I'M NOT A *MONSTER.*"


RIGHT.

SAMNEE '16
MW

8

SPFFT

ST. JOSEPH'S ACADEMY
5
5
WHO *IS* THAT?
IS SHE *NEW?*
KEEP IT DOWN BACK THERE! THIS IS A *FIELD TRIP*, SO *BE RESPECTFUL!*
HEY! ARE YOU AN *EXCHANGE STUDENT* OR SUMPIN'?
WHOSE *HOUSE* IS THAT, EVEN?

JOSEPH'S ACADEMY
COME ALONG NOW, CHILDREN.
SINGLE FILE, AND *NO TALKING.*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
EVERY ONE OF YOU GETS ONE OF THESE SPECIAL PINS TO MARK THIS SPECIAL DAY.
YOU'LL TREASURE THEM, AND YOUR PARENTS WILL BE VERY IMPRESSED.
WELCOME TO THE WHITE HOUSE, GIRLS.
MY NAME IS NAT.
I'LL BE YOUR TOUR GUIDE TODAY.
FOLLOW ME...!

WE'RE WALKING... WE'RE WALKING...
TO YOUR RIGHT, YOU'LL SEE WASHINGTON'S BEDROOM...
...ON YOUR LEFT, A PORTRAIT OF ANDREW JACKSON...
NO. NO.
YOU'RE DEPLORABLE AT THIS, NATASHA. DID YOU STUDY ANYTHING BEFORE WE GOT HERE?
I WAS COUNTING ON YOUR TELEPATHIC GUIDANCE, LION. YOU SAID YOU KNEW THE LAYOUT LIKE THE BACK OF YOUR HAND.
I MAY HAVE EXAGGERATED.
TERRIFIC.
I'M PROBING THEIR LITTLE BRAINS TO SEE WHICH ONE'S THE DARK ROOM ASSASSIN WE'RE AFTER, BUT IT'S NOT EASY FROM A DISTANCE. WATCH FOR CLUES.
DON'T GIVE ME ADVICE.
NOW HERE, WE HAVE THE FAMILY DINING ROOM.
STAY TOGETHER, GIRLS.
CAN YOU IMAGINE THE CONVERSATIONS HAD AROUND THAT TABLE?
ACTUALLY, MA'AM, THAT'S THE STATE DINING ROOM.
PRESIDENT REAGAN HELD A RECEPTION FOR SOVIET UNION GENERAL SECRETARY GORBACHEV THERE BACK IN--

--1990--
YOU MAY BE CORRECT. HISTORY IS NOT MY STRONG SUIT.
GIVE ME A PAIR OF BALLET SLIPPERS ANY DAY, YES? AREN'T THOSE COMFORTABLE?
HEH.
YOU'RE WEIRD...
YOU KNOW ABOUT GORBACHEV. WHAT ELSE ARE YOU AN EXPERT AT, LITTLE ONE?
WHAT DO THE WORDS "DARK ROOM" MEAN TO YOU?
I...
I...
-SNFFF-
GOVORIT!
EXCUSE ME...
...WHEN DO WE MEET VICE PRESIDENT...?
THAT'S HER.
NICE DETECTING. SHE MIGHT AS WELL HAVE SAID "BRING ME MOOSE AND SQUIRREL." MAN, YOU REALLY HAVE A WAY WITH KIDS, DON'T YOU?
RIGHT THIS WAY, LADIES.

WELCOME TO THE LINCOLN BEDROOM.
THE VICE PRESIDENT WILL BE RIGHT WITH YOU.
SINGLE FILE, GIRLS!
YOU WAIT RIGHT--
SHKT
STEP ASIDE, OLD LADY.
I HAVE JOB TO DO.
SO DO I.
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

?
KRK
KKK
SHE TOOK HIS GUN! EVERYONE OUT OF HER WAY!
MOVE!

BLAM
NAT, WE'VE GOT TROUBLE HERE!
I'M WELL AWARE! I'M CHASING IT!

THE LITTLE [redacted] IS HEADED FOR THE SECOND FLOOR--
NO! I MEAN TROUBLE HERE! WITH ME!
WE THOUGHT THERE WAS ONLY ONE ASSASSIN, BUT THERE ARE TWO MORE HALF-PINT SOCIOPATHS ON THE LOOSE! SAVE ME!
ALL OF YOU, UP AGAINST THE WALL! TELL US WHERE YOU HAVE THE VEEP OR THE HEAD COUNT AROUND HERE'S GONNA DROP REAL FAST!
WHENEVER IS CONVENIENT.
I MEAN IT! I AM NOT GOING BACK TO THE MOTHER COUNTRY A FAILURE! I'M COUNTING TO THREE--
NICE SHOOTIN', TEX.
I KNOW.

DROP THE GUN!
DROP IT!
WE WILL OPEN FIRE, KID!
I AM NOT SCARED OF YOU.
I AM SCARED ONLY OF HEAD-MISTRESS.
SHE TRAINED ME SINCE BIRTH. SHE SENT ME HERE FROM DARK ROOM TO KILL YOUR VICE PRESIDENT TO DELAY KEY TREATY.
I CANNOT FAIL HER.
WHAT IS SHE BABBLING ABOUT?
DID YOU MAKE THE CALL TO--?
THEY'RE ON THEIR WAY. GIRL, FOR THE LAST TIME, STAND DOWN!
LET ME SPEAK.
I, TOO, WAS A STUDENT OF THE HEADMISTRESS. MY NAME IS NATASHA ROMANOFF. WHAT IS YOURS?

DEATH!
MY NAME IS DEATH!
YOU HAVE BEEN PROGRAMMED FOR AS LONG AS YOU CAN REMEMBER. I KNOW THIS.
I WAS, TOO.
THE HEADMISTRESS STRIPPED ME OF MY IDENTITY. SHE MADE ME INTO A LIVING WEAPON.
BUT SHE HAS NO MORE HOLD OVER EITHER OF US... FOR SHE IS DEAD.
YOU LIE!
I SAW HER PERISH WITH MY OWN EYES. SHE CANNOT REACH YOU ANYMORE...DO ANY MORE HARM TO YOU.
IF YOU COME WITH ME, I PROMISE THAT I WILL ARRANGE FOR YOU A HAPPY LIFE WORTH LIVING. DON'T YOU WANT THAT?
...
NO!

RADIO THE SECRET SERVICE TO *EVACUATE!*
TELL THEM *S.H.I.E.L.D.* IS HERE!

ANYONE SEE ANYTHING?
AGENT 23, I HAVE EYES ON THE GUNNER!
AGENT 46, ARE YOU IN RANGE?
LINED UP.
THEN TAKE THE SHOT!
SHFT!

DOWN!
EVERYONE DOWN!
GRAB HER! GET HER TO DEPROGRAMMING!
!
THERE ARE TWO MORE INSIDE! DO THE SAME FOR THEM!
COPY THAT, TEAM LEADER?
COPIED AND IN HAND, OVER.

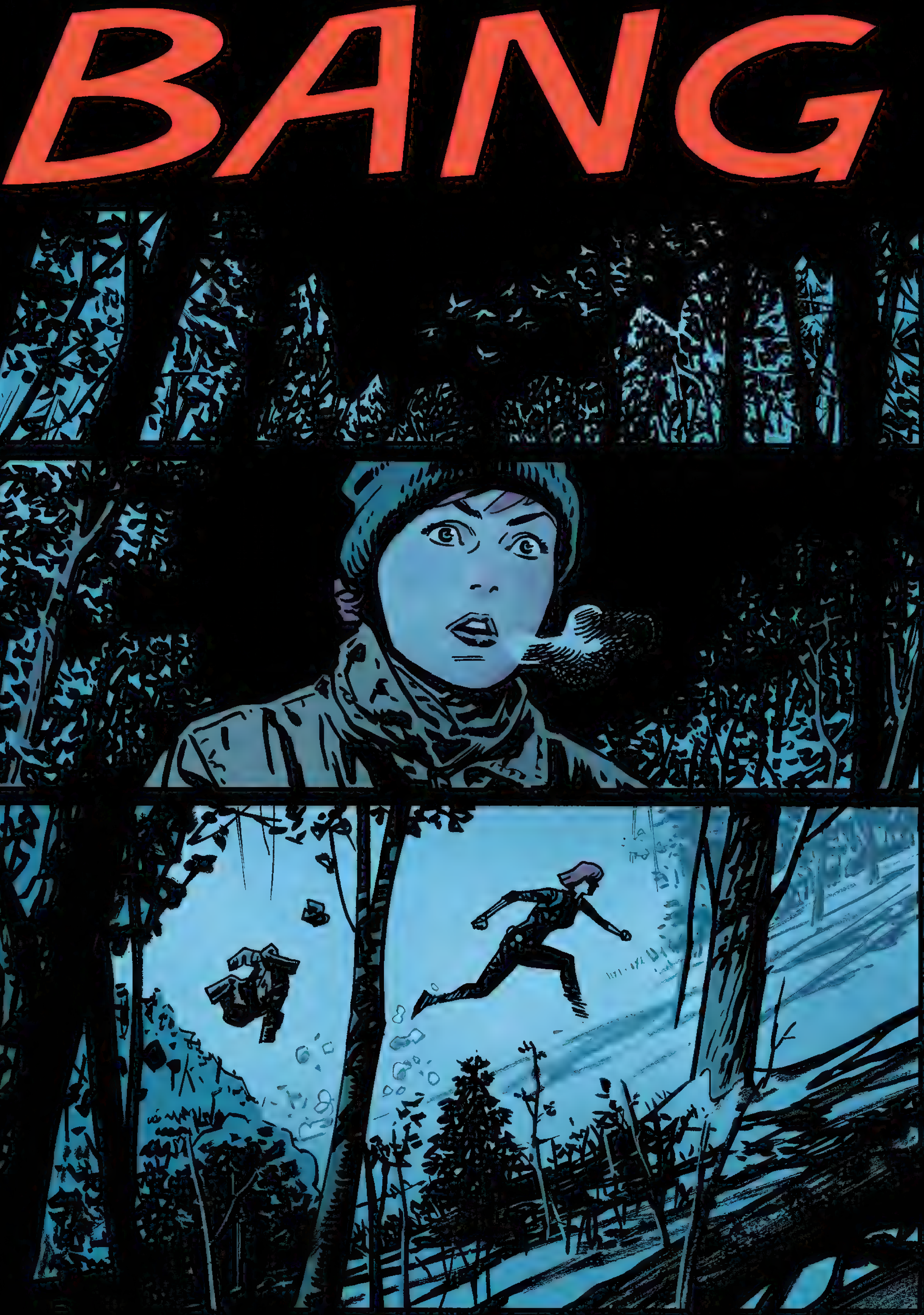
POOR KIDS.
DANGEROUS KIDS.
SHOW SOME COMPASSION, 33. CLEARLY, THEY'RE NOT IN THEIR RIGHT MINDS.
HOW ARE THE HOSTAGES DOING?
EMT
YOU OKAY, SIR?
I COULDN'T ASK FOR A MORE DRAMATIC EXIT.
I PRAY THOSE LITTLE GIRLS HAVE FAMILY OF SOME SORT.

"I HAVE A BROTHER, MYSELF.
"HE LOVES CHILDREN."

I KNOW THE PSYCHOLOGISTS AT S.H.I.E.L.D., LION.
IT MIGHT NOT SEEM TO THE GIRLS THAT THEY'RE SAFE NOW, BUT THEY'LL BE SHOWN KINDNESS AND EVENTUALLY BE PLACED INTO LOVING HOMES.
AMBULANCE
THAT'S THREE DOWN. BUT GOD ONLY KNOWS HOW MANY MORE THE HEADMISTRESS DISPATCHED BEFORE SHE DIED.
IF WE'RE GOING TO FIND THEM ALL, WE'LL NEED A GLOBAL VIEW OF THE SITUATION.

SAMNEE '16
MW

9


BANG

NO.
NO.
NO.
IOSEF, PLEASE...
...BE ALIVE...

...NYET...
IOSEF, DO NOT MOVE. TELL ME WHERE TO FIND A FIRST AID KIT AND I--
A WASTE. REMEMBER, I'M THE *EXPERT*--
-*KAFF*-
--THIS PARTICULAR TYPE OF WOUND. I'M TOO FAR GONE, NAT.
UNACCEPTABLE.
YOU'VE BEEN KEEPING AN *EYE* ON ME. *I KNOW* THAT NOW. I--
IS THAT... WHAT YOU THINK...?
NOT... I...
BUT...
...BUT YOU'VE LEFT CLUES. A TRAIL TO YOUR *HOME.*
NONSENSE. I TOLD YOU BEFORE, I'M OUT OF THE GAME, NAT.
...
IT WAS *RECLUSE* WHO LURED ME HERE, WASN'T IT? IOSEF, I'M *SO SORRY*--
D-DON'T BE. GOOD TO KNOW I STILL... HAVE *USE*...
...EVEN IF JUST...AS *BAIT.*
STAND STRONG, NAT.
CLOSE THE DOOR ON ALL THIS DARK ROOM BUSINESS ONCE AND FOR--*-
IOSEF...?

snap
WHO'S THERE?
SHOW YOURSELF!

NATASHA, RUN!
KRAKK
UNGH, YOU NEVER COULD TAKE ADVICE...
...

SAY HELLO TO THE *WINTER SOLDIER,* NATASHA.
I SEE HIM. WHAT'S YOUR GAME *THIS* TIME, RECLUSE?
SOMETHING I WAS DENIED ALL THOSE YEARS IN THE *RED ROOM,* NATASHA.
TRUE LOVE.
CLOSE THE DOOR? THESE RUSSIAN JANUARIES NEVER DID AGREE WITH ME.
NOT *MY* TRUE LOVE, OF COURSE.
IT SEEMS MR. BARNES HERE CARES FOR *ANOTHER.* ISN'T THAT *RIGHT,* BARNES?
GET *UP,* BARNES.
WE'RE *LEAVING.*
SORRY, 'TASHA.
I AM *SERIOUSLY* OFF-MISSION--

QUIET!
FRAK
COME TO FIND OUT, AS I SPUN MY WEB LOVERBOY HERE HAS BEEN BEHAVING LIKE YOUR GUARDIAN ANGEL ALL THIS TIME.
OH, BARNES...
AH. PILLOW TALK. I CAN TELL FROM YOUR EXPRESSION THAT THIS COMES AS A SHOCK.
GIVEN YOUR HISTORY, I'M SURPRISED YOU TWO AREN'T MORE... COMMUNICATIVE.
HERE WE ARE, THE THREE OF US... ALL THAT REMAINS OF THE RED ROOM.
AND I SWEAR TO YOU, ONLY ONE OF US WILL WALK OUT.
NOT THE DISGRACED OAF WHO ALLOWED ME TO CAPTURE HIM.
AND NOT THE TRAITOR WHO MURDERED OUR BELOVED TEACHER AND THEN TURNED HER BACK ON ME.
ULTIMATELY, NATASHA, ONLY ONE SPIDER EMERGES DOMINANT FROM THE RUBBLE OF THE RED ROOM... AND IT WON'T BE YOU.
YOU, THEN?
YOU, WHO LED ME INTO IOSEF'S CABIN...
...A PLACE WHOSE SECRETS I KNOW?
JAMES!
!

SHFFT!
!
SPDINK
KRRRR
CHINK
NICE.
HANG ON. I CAN'T MOVE WITH THIS--
NUT UP, BARNES. IT'S JUST A *NEODYMIUM ELECTRO-MAGNET.*
DIG INSIDE, CUT THE *CURRENT* AND--
CLUNK
FWAK

CHUD
FWUMP

KUNK
FAKT
SSHAK

chak
FFWAAM

BOOSH
SHUMP
FUMP
HIGH?
LOW.
JUST LIKE THE OLD DAYS.
IF YOU SAY SO.

FWUFT
RANCH
KSHHHH
ANNG

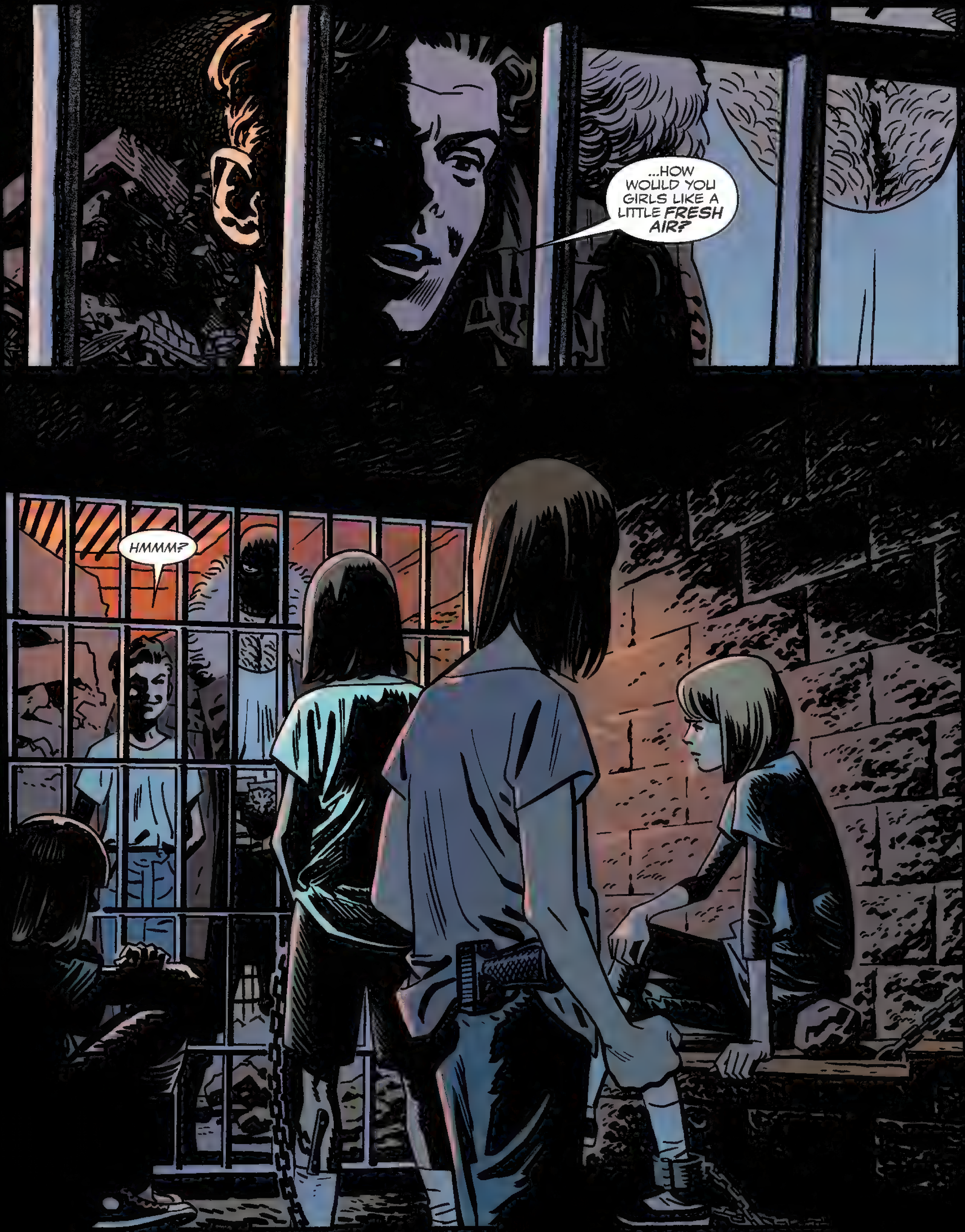
I CAN'T HOLD HER LONG! STING HER, FULL POWER!
DO IT!
SSHKKKKICHHZZZAKT
SOME ARM YOU HAVE ON YOU, BARNES.
TOO BAD IT'S NOT BETTER AT HOLDING THINGS.

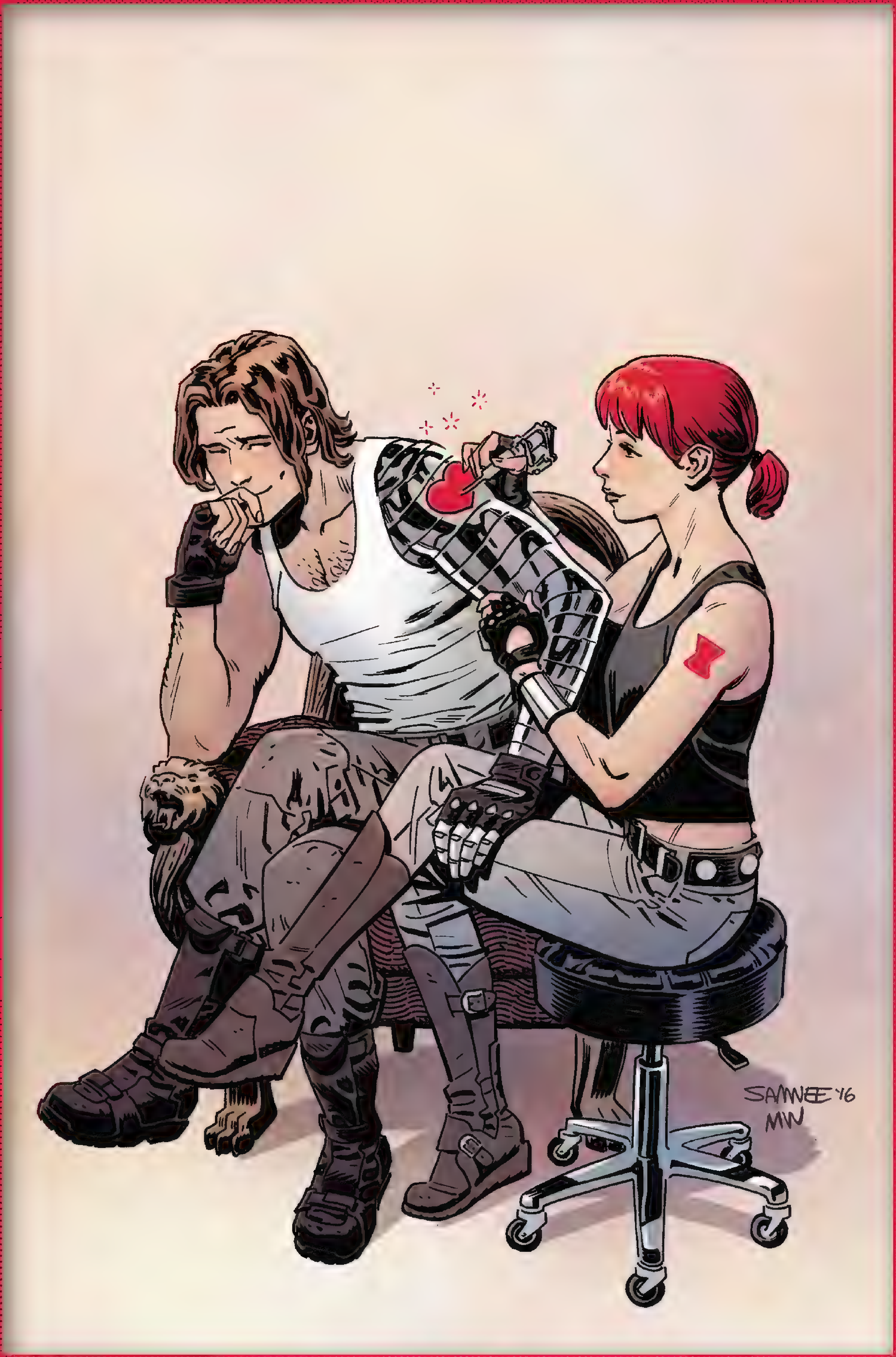
STOP!
ANOTHER TIME, COMRADE.

BARNES?
WE NEED TO TALK.
I'LL START.
THANK YOU FOR THE ASSIST. CLEARLY, RECLUSE HAS BEEN *TRAINING* SINCE WE LAST MET.
WE MAKE A GOOD TEAM.
YOU MUST REMEMBER *THAT* MUCH.
NOW, LET'S MOVE ON TO THE PARTS THAT *INSULT* ME.
HAVE YOU REALLY BEEN KEEPING AN EYE ON ME FOR A WHILE?
I--
I DON'T NEED YOU TO BE MY *KEEPER,* BARNES.
PLEASE TELL ME THERE'S MORE TO YOUR PRESENCE THAN *THAT.*
JAMES?

THERE IS. **NICK FURY** WOULD LIKE A **WORD** WITH YOU, NAT.

THE WEEPING LION'S LAIR
I'M GRATEFUL FOR YOUR PATIENCE, COUSIN.
NOW THAT I HAVE THE WIDOW'S TRUST AFTER QUITE *LITERALLY* TAKING A *BULLET* FOR HER...
...WE CAN PROCEED TO THE *FINAL STAGE* WITHOUT *INTERFERENCE*.
...
ONE MORE MISSION WITH HER. JUST ONE. SHE'LL BE *DISTRACTED*, AND...
...
YES. AND YOU'LL HAVE THE CHANCE TO PUT THE LAST OF OUR LITTLE *CHESS PIECES* INTO *PLAY*.
SPEAKING OF *WHICH*...


...HOW WOULD YOU GIRLS LIKE A LITTLE *FRESH AIR?*
HMMM?


SAMNEE '16
MW

BLACK WIDOW

YOU DON'T LOOK SETTLED.
I'M HANDLING. JUST HAVEN'T SAT IN THE BACKSEAT SINCE I WAS A CHILD.
IT WILL BE A QUICK TRIP.
EVEN **FASTER** IF WE'D TAKEN **MY** SHIP. WHERE'D YOU FIND **THIS** ANTIQUE?
I HAVE CONNECTIONS. WE NEEDED ONE THAT WE KNEW FOR SURE WASN'T MONITORED BY S.H.I.E.L.D.
I ALREADY **KNOW** HOW TO DUCK S.H.I.E.L.D.
WHATEVER. LION, SUIT UP.
YOU'RE ABOUT TO BE THE FIRST LION ON THE MOON.

THERE IS A LOT OF MOON HERE. YOU COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN US ANY CLOSER?
YOU SAID IT. WE NEED TO KEEP AS LOW A PROFILE AS POSSIBLE.
YOU THINK THE BLUE AREA ISN'T A HOT SPOT UNDER S.H.I.E.L.D.'S WATCH?
LION, YOU GETTING ALL THIS?
"BLAH BLAH BLAH SPY STUFF BLAH WHEN WILL ROMANOFF JUST MAKE OUT WITH ME?" YEAH, I GOT IT.
YOU'RE CERTAIN HE'S HERE, THOUGH?
TRUST ME.
FOR ONCE.
JUST BE PREPARED, NAT. HE'S NOT THE SAME MAN WE ONCE KNEW.
I'LL TRY NOT TO HOLD THAT AGAINST HIM.

HOW DO YOU KNOW I'M SAFE UP HERE?
WE'RE THE ONES WHO NEED TO BE WORRIED. ABOUT YOU.
THE UNDERCOLLAR YOU'RE WEARING? TELEPATHIC DAMPER.
WE'LL TURN IT OFF WHEN WE NEED TO. UNTIL THEN, CONCENTRATE ON KEEPING UP.

MAYBE I DON'T NEED TO POKE AROUND IN HIS BRAIN.
MAYBE WE COULD JUST, I DON'T KNOW, TALK TO HIM.
WHEN I WANT YOUR ADVICE, I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU. KEEP UP.
CLINK
SHFFF
EXCUSE ME FOR WANTING TO LOOK AROUND SINCE I'VE NEVER BEEN ON THE MOON BEFORE.
ARE YOU SURE WE'RE NOT GOING IN CIRCLES? HOW DO WE FIND THIS GUY?
CLINK
WE DON'T.
HE SEES EVERYTHING. LITERALLY EVERYTHING. THE MOMENT WE LANDED, I GUARANTEE HE STARTED APPROACHING.
SHFFFT
ZZZZZZZIP
-GASP-
<"FRESH AIR," HE PROMISED ME.>*
BRED KAKOY TO.
*TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN.
OF COURSE.
THE SUSPENSE--
CLINK
SHFFT
THE SUSPENSE IS--
CLINK
SHFF

CLINK
CHAAANG
...NICK...
NICK FURY?
NOT ANYMORE.
NOW HE'S KNOWN AS THE UNSEEN. AND HE DOESN'T GIVE UP INFORMATION EASILY.

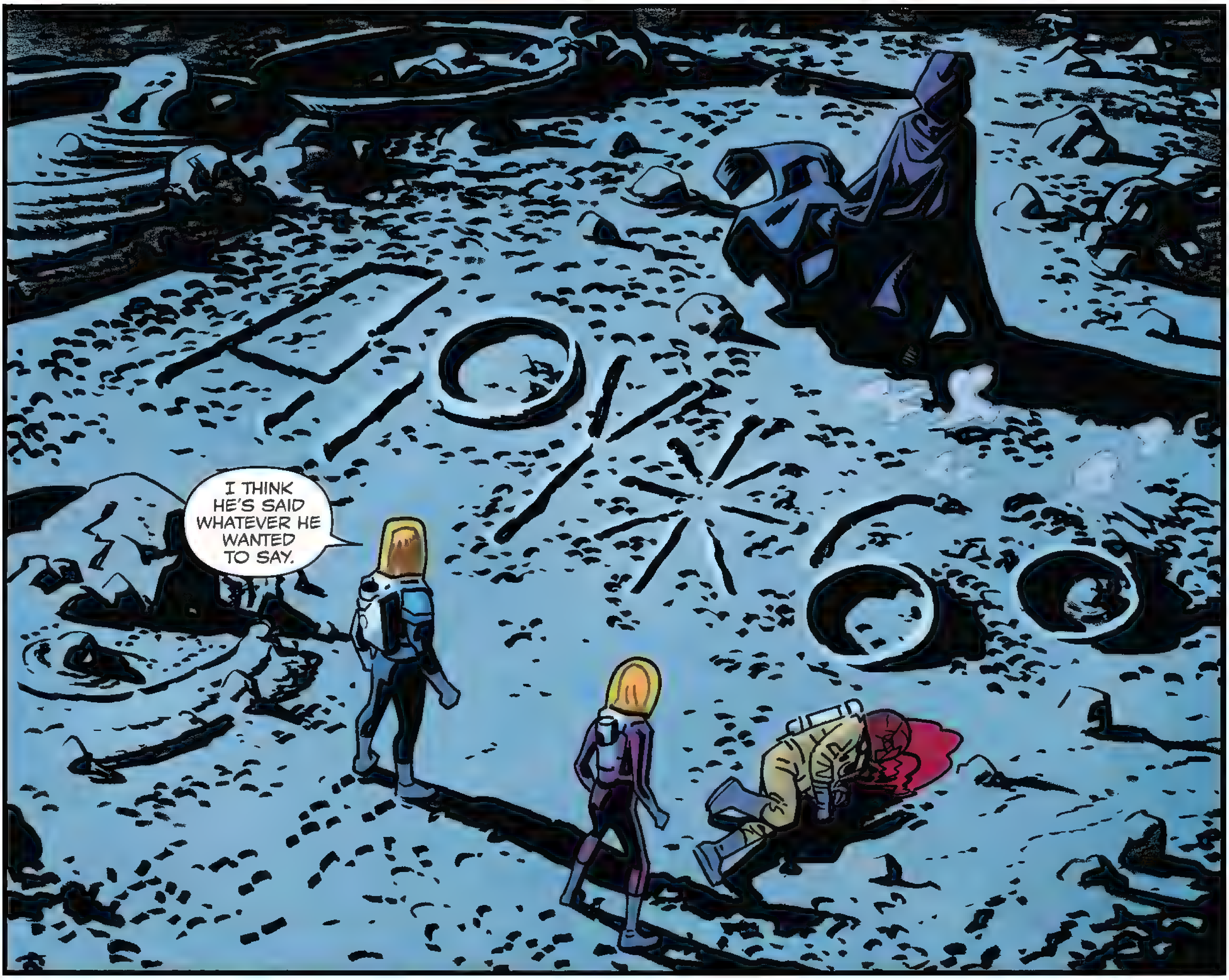
CAN HE HEAR US?
OH, YEAH.
NICHOLAS, I DO NOT KNOW HOW...OR WHY...YOU'VE *BECOME*...WHATEVER IT IS YOU NOW ARE.
I HOPE IT WAS *WILLFUL* AND NOT...
...
NICK, JAMES SAID YOU...*ASKED* FOR ME. IN YOUR WAY. AND YOUR TIMING IS *FORTUITOUS*.
I AM IN THE MIDDLE--I HOPE IT'S AT *LEAST* THE MIDDLE--OF SAVING MANY, MANY LIVES--
--AND APPROXIMATELY HALF A DOZEN *SOULS*. LITTLE GIRLS, NICK--WARPED BY THE MODERN VERSION OF THE SAME *RED ROOM* WHERE I TRAINED.
AND I WOULD NOT WISH THAT FATE ON *ANYONE*.
NICK, IF YOU *KNOW* ANYTHING THAT WILL HELP HER...AND I'M *CONFIDENT* YOU *DO*...
SHFFT
THEN, PLEASE.
SURELY WE DIDN'T COME ALL THIS WAY FOR *NOTHING*.

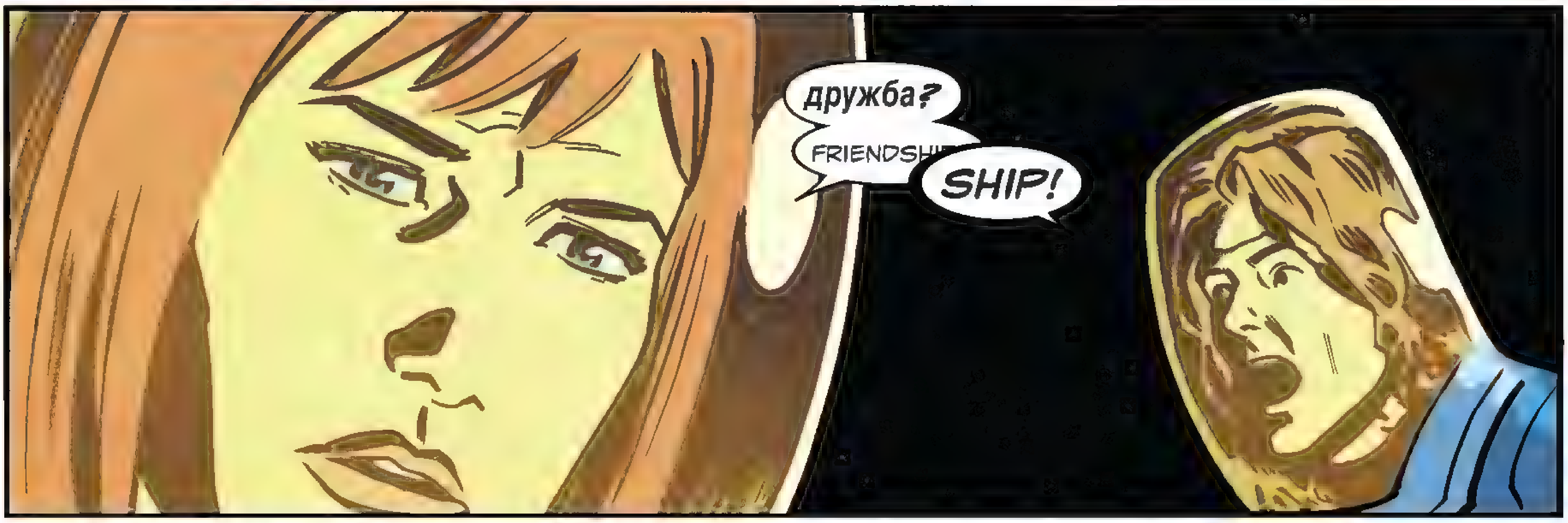
‹NOW TO PICK UP LION AND DITCH THOSE TWO LOSERS...›
IF WE'RE ON A TIMETABLE, TAKE OFF THE LEASH. SO MANY JUICY SECRETS IN THAT BRAIN, I BET...
I'LL SHUT YOUR DAMPER OFF WHEN THE RIGHT TIME COMES. SHOW RESPECT.
NICK, IF YOU HAVE INTEL TO GIVE, I NEED IT. NOW.
DON'T PLAY GAMES WITH ME. PLEASE. WE WERE FRIENDS ONCE.
CLANK
SHFFFTT
CL-CHANG
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, CHRISTMAS FUTURE!
LION, NO!

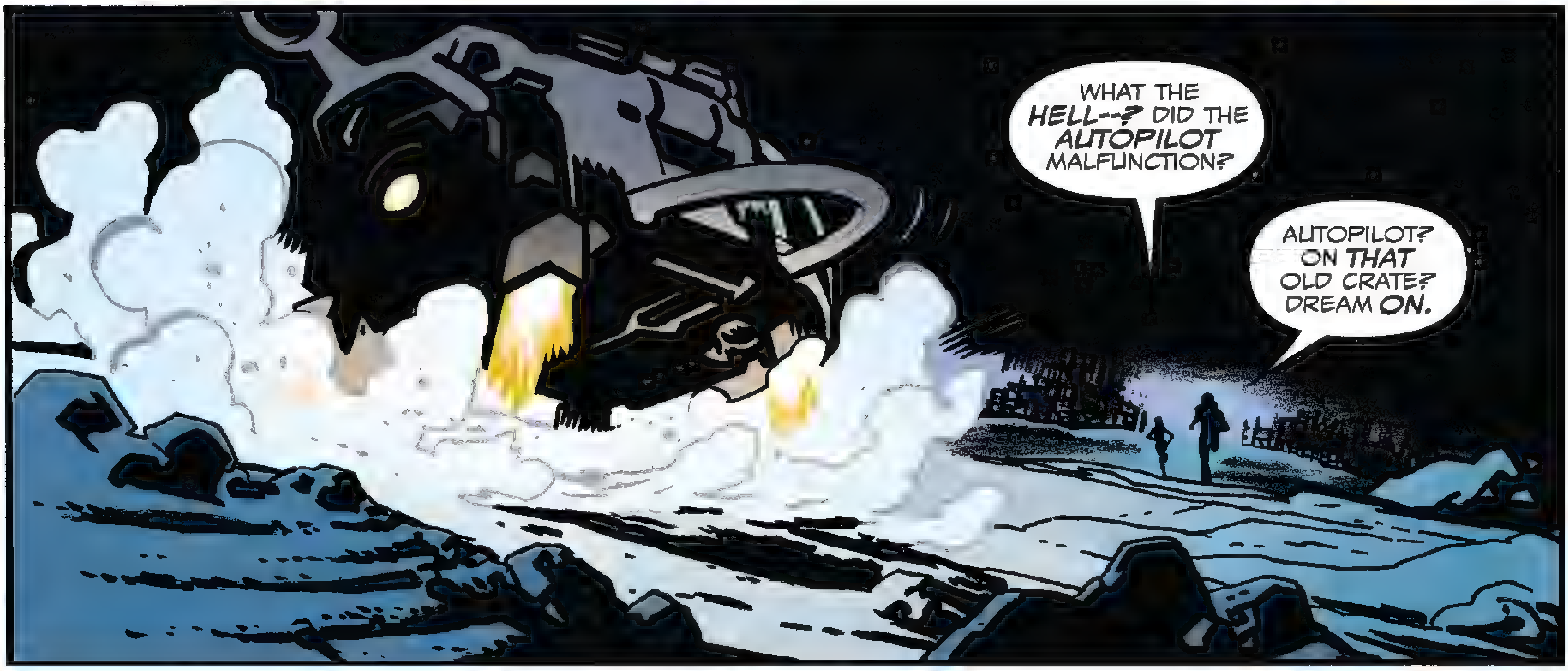
HEY!
COME BACK HERE! I'M NOT *FINISHED* WITH YOU!
IN *FACT*... I HAVEN'T EVEN *STARTED* YET!

OH... GOD...
...THE KNOWLEDGE...
...ALL THE KNOWLEDGE...
...ALL THERE IS...
IT'S...
IT'S...
BEAUTIFUL.

DAVAY ZHE...DAVAY ZHE...!
FLIP FLIP
CHAK
FLIP
SHPLAPPPFT
FUMP
POLUCHILOS.
CHNK
VRRRRR
WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
MY GUESS IS INFORMATION OVERLOAD.
THEN HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET NICK TO--
NAT?
CLANK
THUD
SHFFFT


I THINK HE'S SAID WHATEVER HE WANTED TO SAY.


дружба?
FRIENDSHI
SHIP!


WHAT THE HELL--? DID THE AUTOPILOT MALFUNCTION?
AUTOPILOT? ON THAT OLD CRATE? DREAM ON.

ALIEN CAR-JACKER?
VRR-TRT
RRT
RRR
MOST LIKELY
HFFF HFFF
A STOWAWAY
HFFF HFFF
HA HA HA HA
JAMES--?
HHHHH
CAN'T
HFFF
CAN'T BREATHE
WE'RE BOTH ALMOST OUT OF AIR...? HOW--
... A PARTING GIFT FROM THE LION.
HE MADE US THINK WE HAD FULL TANKS.
E
ALL RIGHT. I'M EMPTYING MY SUPPLY INTO YOURS.
IT'LL BE JUST ENOUGH TO GET TO THE SHIP.
NAT, NO--!

JAMES... LET ME DO THIS.
AFTER ALL YOU'VE DONE FOR ME THESE LAST FEW WEEKS.
IOSEF? A MUTUAL FRIEND NEEDS A HAND...
MY TURN...
...TO BE THE SAVIOR...
TSSSSST
E
F
-HFFF-
GO!

HFFF
HFFF
HF
H
WHUMP
GUESSED RIGHT.

I'M SORRY.
I'M SO, SO SORRY.
NNNNOOOOO
NN--!
EASE UP
ON THE METAL
ARM THERE, PAL
NAT?
OH, THANK GOD...
THANK YOU, JAMES.
I'LL SEND YOU -OW- THE MEDICAL BILL FOR THE CRACKED RIBS.

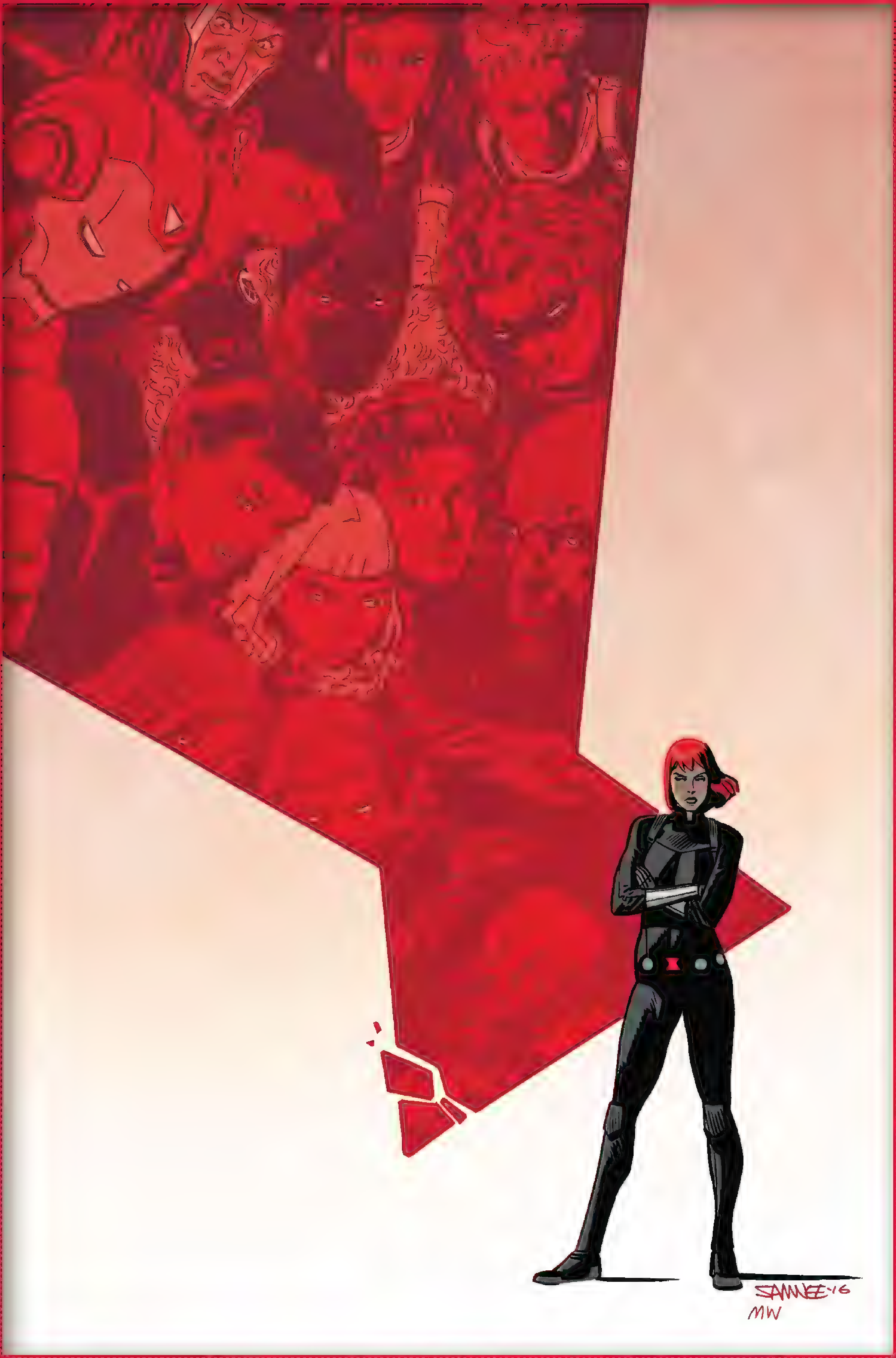
SO CAN WE LEAVE NOW?
QUIET, MINI-ME.
THE WAY...THE WAY YOU CALLED ME "JAMES" AGAIN...
NAT, DID THE LION GIVE YOU BACK THE KNOWLEDGE OF OU
YAWN.
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
BUT NOT EVEN YOU CAN KEEP SECRETS FROM *ME.*
NOW, STRAP IN AND TELL ME WHERE TO *DROP* YOU.
"DROP"...? I THOUGHT--
STOP PINING, SCHOOLBOY.
I HAVE A JOB TO DO--
--AND *ROMANCE* IS NOT ON THE *DOCKET.*
DON'T WORRY, BARNES.
WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE THE MOON.

HELLO. WE'VE NOT MET.
BUT WE HAVE A COMMON ENEMY: NATASHA ROMANOFF, A.K.A. THE BLACK WIDOW.
I SUGGEST YOU LET ME HANDLE HER.
TO DO SO, I WILL NEED TO RECLAIM MY GIRLS HERE.
SO IF YOU WOULD BE SO KIND...
OH, MY.
I DO LOVE STRONG, SILENT MEN.
COME HERE. COME TO ME.
LET ME GIVE YOU A KISS.
SHNK

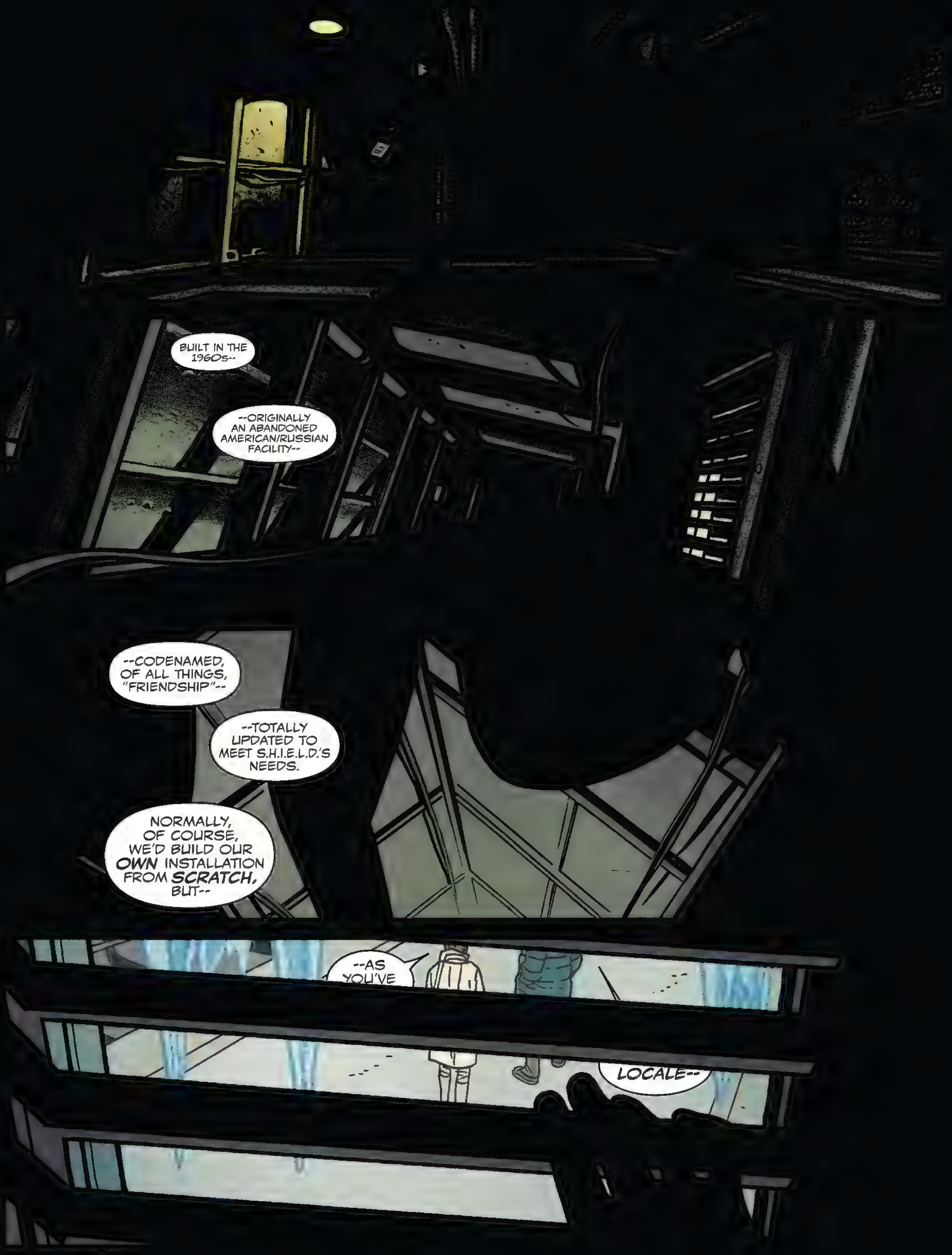
snap
RNCH
FUT
TUG
CLANK

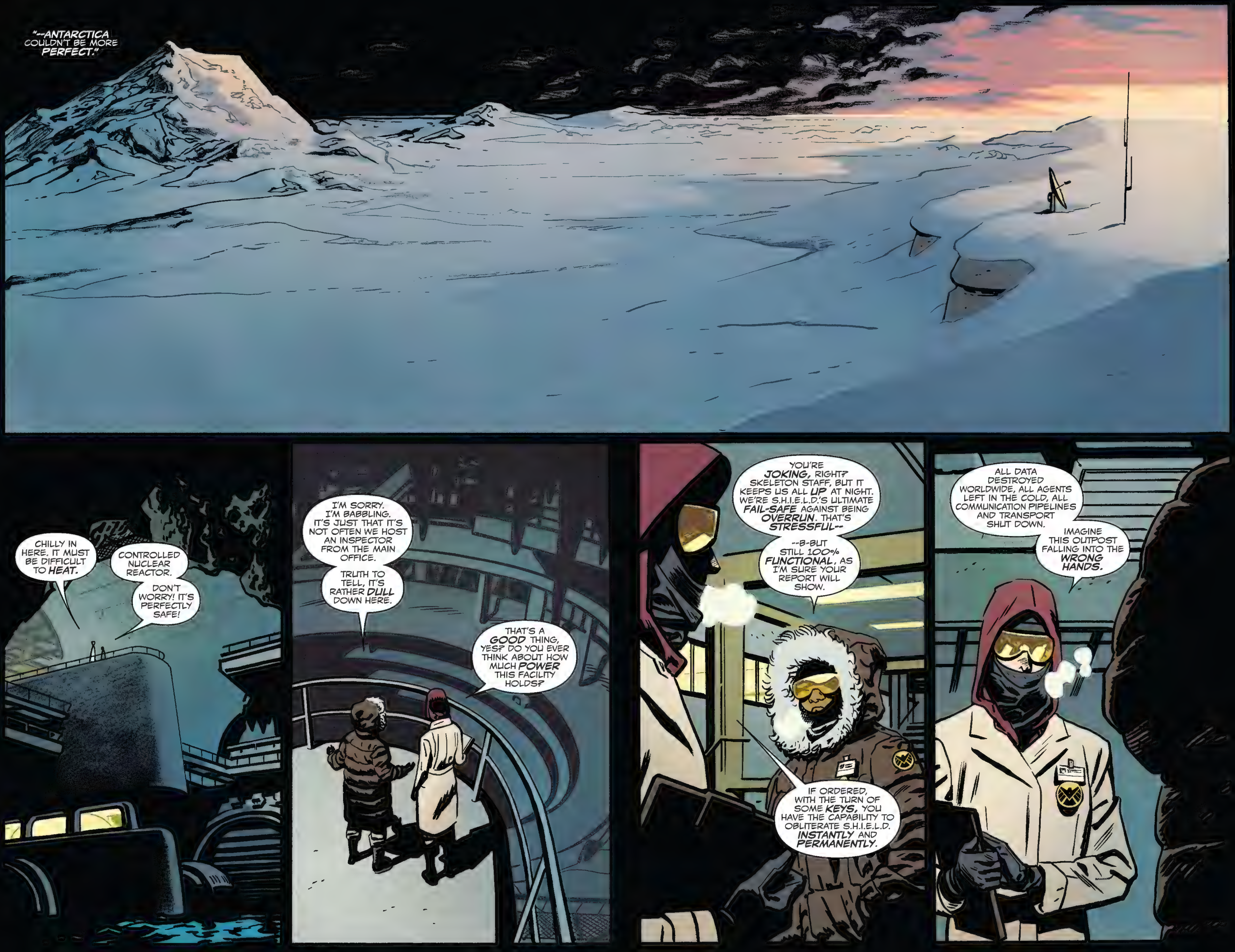
!
KAFF
...!
BANG!

SPASIBO, GIRLS. I APOLOGIZE THAT IT'S TAKEN SO LONG TO FIND YOU. I'VE BEEN SEARCHING EVER SO LONG.
OUR HEADMISTRESS, I REGRET TO REPORT, IS GONE-- MURDERED BY THE WIDOW--
--BUT IN THE PAIN OF LONELINESS, IT GIVES ME SUCH COMFORT TO SEE THE REST OF MY FAMILY AGAIN.
CLIK
THANK YOU FOR SAVING ME, LITTLE ONES.


SAMNEE '16
MW

11


BUILT IN THE 1960s--
--ORIGINALLY AN ABANDONED AMERICAN/RUSSIAN FACILITY--
--CODENAMED, OF ALL THINGS, "FRIENDSHIP"--
--TOTALLY UPDATED TO MEET S.H.I.E.L.D.'S NEEDS.
NORMALLY, OF COURSE, WE'D BUILD OUR *OWN* INSTALLATION FROM *SCRATCH,* BUT--
--AS YOU'VE
LOCALE--


"--ANTARCTICA COULDN'T BE MORE PERFECT."
CHILLY IN HERE. IT MUST BE DIFFICULT TO HEAT.
CONTROLLED NUCLEAR REACTOR.
DON'T WORRY! IT'S PERFECTLY SAFE!
I'M SORRY. I'M BABBLING. IT'S JUST THAT IT'S NOT OFTEN WE HOST AN INSPECTOR FROM THE MAIN OFFICE.
TRUTH TO TELL, IT'S RATHER DULL DOWN HERE.
THAT'S A GOOD THING, YES? DO YOU EVER THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH POWER THIS FACILITY HOLDS?
YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT? SKELETON STAFF, BUT IT KEEPS US ALL UP AT NIGHT. WE'RE S.H.I.E.L.D.'S ULTIMATE FAIL-SAFE AGAINST BEING OVERRUN. THAT'S STRESSFUL--
--B-BUT STILL 100% FUNCTIONAL, AS I'M SURE YOUR REPORT WILL SHOW.
IF ORDERED, WITH THE TURN OF SOME KEYS, YOU HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO OBLITERATE S.H.I.E.L.D. INSTANTLY AND PERMANENTLY.
ALL DATA DESTROYED WORLDWIDE, ALL AGENTS LEFT IN THE COLD, ALL COMMUNICATION PIPELINES AND TRANSPORT SHUT DOWN.
IMAGINE THIS OUTPOST FALLING INTO THE WRONG HANDS.

K-SPLANG
!

QUELLE SURPRISE...!
NOT SO FAST, LADIES!
SWIK
!

thop
tink
‹NICE. ONE KEY DOWN.›*
‹NICE *START*, YOU MEAN.›
‹FIVE TO *GO*.›
*TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN.
AAAAH!
TINK
‹RUN, SISTERS!›
FAM
FAM
FAM

?
YOU--YOU COVERED ME! YOU SAVED MY LIFE--
I'VE DONE BIGGER FAVORS FOR S.H.I.E.L.D.
STILL, MAYBE IT'S WORTH SOME INTEL ON THESE KEYS?
FOR THE SELF-DESTRUCT.
EACH IS ASSIGNED TO ONE OF US SO THEY'RE NEVER ALL IN ONE PLACE.
ONE'S A DUD, BUT NO ONE KNOWS WHICH. SAME PRINCIPLE AS A FIRING SQUAD--ONE RANDOM GUN HOLDS A BLANK SO EACH KILLER CAN THINK MAYBE HE'S INNOCENT OF THE DEED--
--BUT YOU STILL NEED ALL THE KEYS.
SMART ENOUGH.
BEST THING YOU CAN DO NOW IS EVACUATE THE FACILITY.
ASAP.

KCHAK
FAK
SWAK
‹STOP DODGING AND FIGHT!›
‹YOU'RE SUCH A "LEGEND"!›
‹PROVE YOUR WORTH!›

‹YOU FOOL! YOU'VE LEFT YOURSELF COMPLETELY OPEN!›
‹OLD WOMAN, LOOK AT ME! LOOK IN THE FACE OF YOUR DEATH!›
GOD... YOU'RE SO YOUNG...
-SIGH-
?
ZZT!
ZZZTTKKT
‹YOU ARE ADORABLE.›

‹I'M DOING THIS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD. YOU'RE A *PAWN*.›
‹GO TO HELL.›
‹WHERE ARE THE *OTHERS?*›
‹GEARING UP TO KICK YOUR *ASS*.›
STOP HER!
‹NICE TRY, COW.›

‹YOU HAVE A KEY, ALSO? DO YOU NOT REALIZE THE--›
‹HOW DID YOU GET DOWN HERE? HOW?›
KKKCKK
‹I'LL DIE... BEFORE I SAY...!›
BLACK WIDOW! WAIT!
YOU HAVE TO STOP THE OTHERS! THERE ARE SIX KEYS TOTAL THAT HAVE TO BE TURNED SIMULTANEOUSLY--
--OH, MY GOD, WAS THIS NOT THE KIND OF DAY I WAS EXPECTING--
--AND THOSE GIRLS--
--SIX GIRLS, SIX KEYS. OF COURSE. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS ROUND THEM ALL UP TO MAKE CERTAIN S.H.I.E.L.D. DOESN'T IMPLODE.
PIECE OF--
...
TZAKK

KRAKKAK
KRAKKAK
SHKAKK

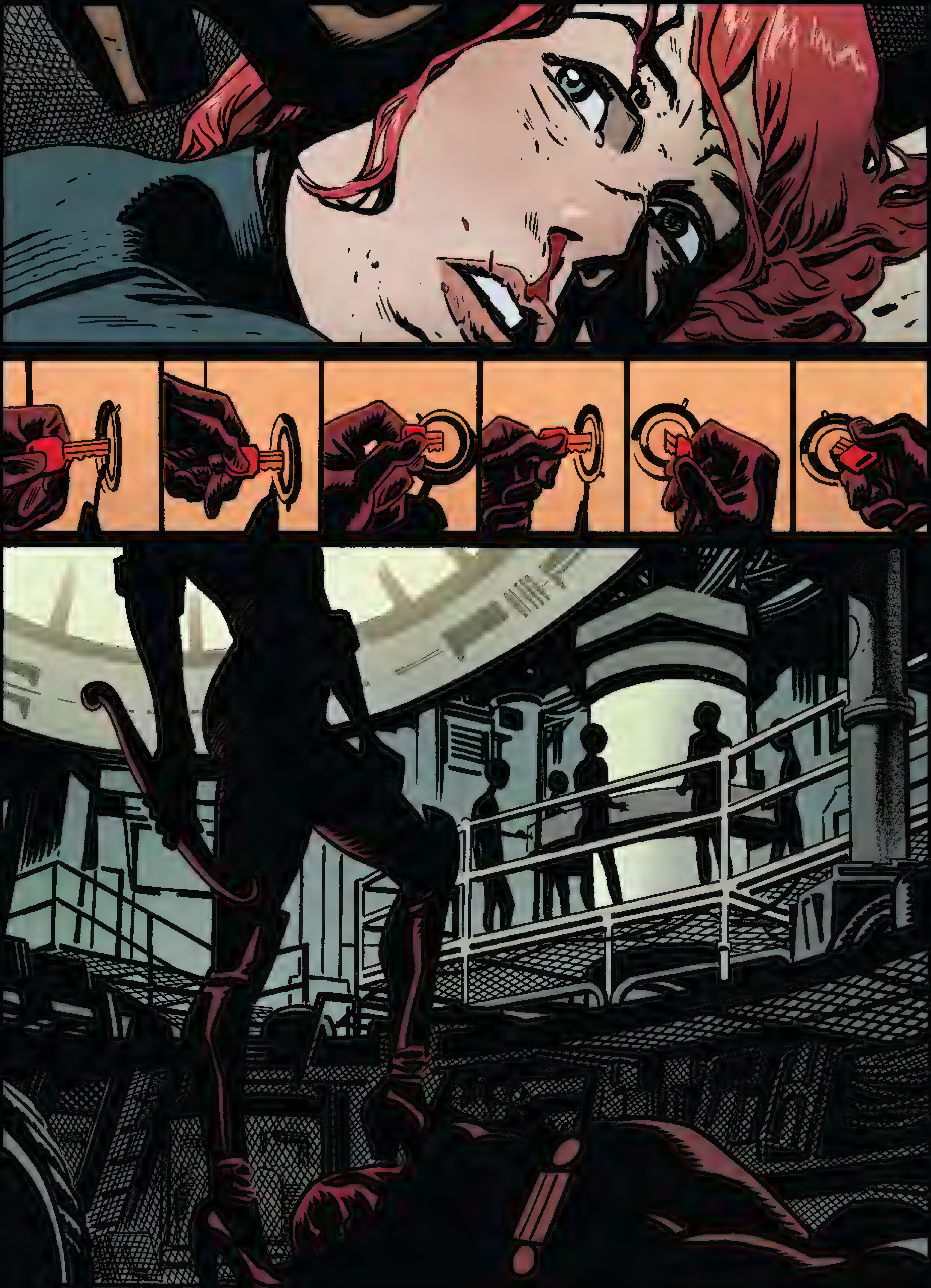
‹THIS IS MY MISSION! AND THIS TIME, I WILL SUCCEED!›
SHUNK

CHYORT...
‹LITTLE ONE, YOU'RE BEING USED.›
‹I DO NOT TAKE PLEASURE IN HURTING ANY OF YOU. IT NEED NOT END FOR YOU LIKE THIS.›
‹IT NEED NOT END AT ALL, YOU PATHETIC HAS-BEEN. I NEED WHAT THIS MAN HAS.›
‹I AM TRYING TO SAVE YOU.›
‹YOU HAVE NOT BEEN TOLD HOW HIGH THE STAKES ARE IN THIS GAME.›
‹TAKE ONE MORE STEP AND I OPEN HIS LUNG.›
‹I CANNOT LET YOU TAKE THAT KEY, MALYSHKA.›
‹THOUSANDS OF LIVES ARE AT STAKE.›
‹WHAT WILL YOU DO? MAKE ME SMILE TO DEATH?›

<OR TAKE A SHOT? RIDICULOUS!>
<THERE IS NO SHOT EXCEPT THROUGH AN INNOCENT MAN!>
<HOW BADLY DO YOU WANT THIS KEY, OLD WOMAN?>
BLAM
BLA
GHHH!
NNNGHH!
YOU--YOU SHOT ME! YOU REALLY SHOT ME, YOU CRAZY-ASS BI--
IT'S A FLESH WOUND. I AM VERY GOOD. YOU'LL BE FINE.
GO. JOIN THE OTHERS IN ESCAPE.

‹I'M SO SORRY, LITTLE ONE, BUT YOU LEFT ME NO ***OPTION.*** IF ONLY THINGS HAD NOT--›
?
NONE OF THIS BLOOD IS COMING FROM Y--
KRAK
FWAKT
NNH
‹TRI-WEAVE BULLETPROOF CARBON POLYMER. SECOND IN DURABILITY ONLY TO ***UNSTABLE MOLECULES.***›
‹THAT'S RIGHT. I SPARED NO EXPENSE FOR MY GIRLS.›
‹YOUR... GIRLS...?›
‹RECLUSE...?›

‹NOT ANYMORE.›
‹WITH MOTHER GONE, SOMEONE HAS TO ASSUME HER DUTIES...›
‹...AS HEADMISTRESS.›



SAMNEE '16
MW

ONCE UPON A TIME, NATASHA, YOU INSULTED ME. YOU *DEGRADED* ME.
YOU TURNED YOUR *BACK* ON ME.
AND NOW YOU'RE ON YOUR *KNEES* BEFORE ME...AS IT *SHOULD* BE.
-KKKTTKK-
YOU'LL... BE ON...
-HKKKH-
...ON THE GROUND... WHEN THIS IS...
...*OVER?* IT'S *ALREADY* OVER.
THIS IS HOW S.H.I.E.L.D. *DIES.*
ON *YOUR WATCH.*

SIX GIRLS WITH SIX KEYS THAT MUST BE TURNED AT THE EXACT SAME INSTANT--
--TO ACTIVATE S.H.I.E.L.D.'S ULTIMATE FAIL-SAFE, DESTROYING ALL OF ITS DATA, ALL OF ITS EQUIPMENT. HELICARRIERS WILL PLUNGE FROM THE SKY, AGENTS WILL DIE MID-MISSION.
STILL, YOU CAN STOP THIS... IF YOU SIMPLY HONOR YOUR TRAINING.
THEY'RE WATCHING THE CLOCK. THEY ACT WHEN IT REACHES 12. IF ANY ONE OF THEM MISSES BY EVEN A SPLIT SECOND, NOTHING HAPPENS. SO...
...KILL ONE. IT'S YOUR ONLY OPTION. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHICH ONE.
KILL ONE TO SAVE THOUSANDS.
JUST LIKE IN THE OLD DAYS.
TIK
TIK
ANY ONE. FOLLOW YOUR INSTINCTS. I'VE SET YOUR STING TO LETHAL.
YOU'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME.
CHOOSE.
TIK
TIK
TIK
TIK
FFT!
KSHHH
? NO!
EMERGENCY FLOOD

SWAPT
-HFFF-
-HFFF-
-HH-

NNNNNHH
TUNK
TAKE HER.
SHE IS AT OUR MERCY.
NO. LISTEN TO ME.
WE ARE ALL AT RECLUSE'S MERCY.
YOU BELIEVE SHE'S LOOKING OUT FOR YOU...BUT THINK. THINK BACK JUST A FEW MINUTES.
SHE KNEW SHE COULD TAKE A DEAD GIRL'S KEY AND USE IT HERSELF. SHE SIMPLY WISHED TO BREAK ME BY HAVING ME KILL ONE OF YOU.
YOU HEARD HER. "IT DOESN'T MATTER WHICH ONE." HOW... HOW CAN YOU STAY LOYAL TO THAT?
...
GET AWAY FROM THEM!

DON'T YOU POISON THEIR MINDS!
DON'T YOU DARE!
THESE GIRLS ARE MINE!
JUST LIKE HEADMISTRESS. APPLE, TREE.
THEY'RE SIMPLY WEAPONS TO YOU. LITTLE PUPPETS, NOTHING MORE.
THEY DESERVE LIVES. I'M GETTING THEM OUT OF HERE.
DON'T LET HER LEAD YOU ANYWHERE, GIRLS! ALL SHE CAN OFFER YOU IS CHAOS AND UNCERTAINTY! I GIVE YOU PURPOSE!
DECIDE WHICH ONE OF US YOU'RE GOING TO FOLLOW!
CHAK
NO.
YOU DECIDE.
SPLASH

SHING
KAK AKKKK
SWIKT

YOU SAID I HAD TO FACE MY FEARS TO FIGHT YOU!
I HAVE!
YOU SAID I COULD NEVER BEAT YOU!
I DID! I TORE YOUR LIFE APART!
SAY SOMETHING NOW!
WHAT AN INTERESTING BLADE.
I'M SURPRISED YOU COULDN'T KILL ME WITH SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
I'LL USE IT TO CLEAN YOUR BONES!
WELL...
...I'LL USE IT AS A HANDLE.
?

THANK--
-KAFF- THANK YOU.
FOR WHAT?
FOR GIVING ME ANOTHER CHANCE AT YOU?
AND YOU LADIES...WE'LL DISCUSS THIS LATER!
IT TOOK YOU AND YOUR BOYFRIEND TO FIGHT ME TO A DRAW IN RUSSIA, NATASHA.
WHY DO YOU KEEP TELLING YOURSELF YOU ALONE HAVE ANY CHANCE WITH ME?
BECAUSE I LEARNED LESS FROM YOUR MOTHER THAN YOU DID.
DO NOT TALK ABOUT HER!
YOU DO NOT TALK ABOUT HER!

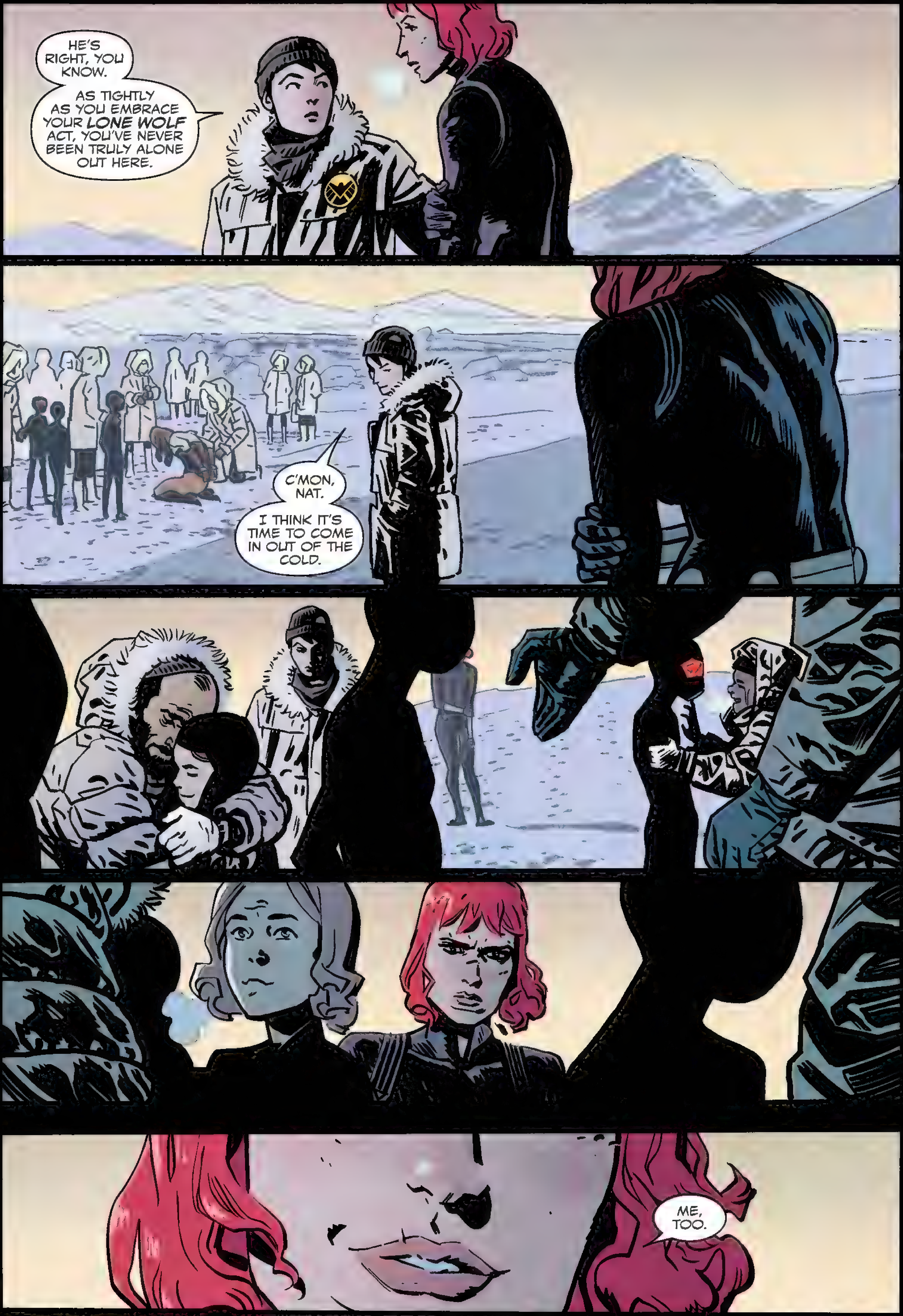
I REMAIN A BETTER FIGHTER THAN YOU.
BUT A LESSER **ASSASSIN.**
EXACTLY. AND DO YOU KNOW WHY THAT **IS,** YOU PATHETIC **RELIC?**
BECAUSE I **CARE.**
YOU'RE HERE TO EXPLOIT THESE GIRLS.
I'M HERE TO SAVE THEM.

WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE--
COME BACK HERE!
DON'T YOU DARE USE MY GIRLS AGAINST ME!
BREAK THE CYCLE, RECLUSE. THEY NEED NOT BE RAISED AS YOU AND I WERE.
I'M WILLING TO GIVE THEM THE CHANCE TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN PATH.
ARE YOU?

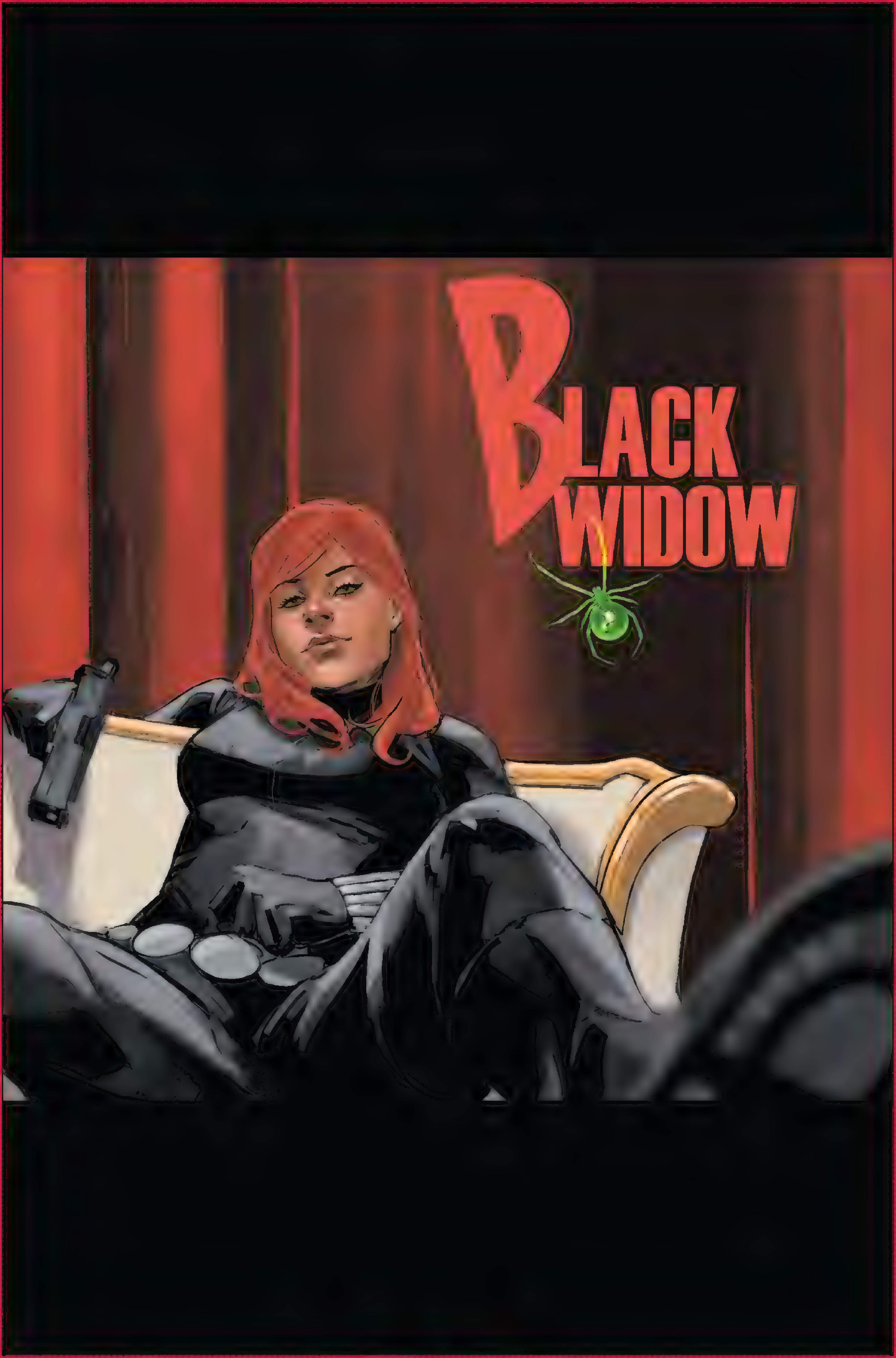
YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT THEM LIKE I DO...
ALL RIGHT, GIRLS. ENOUGH OF THIS. FORGET TODAY. YOU WILL HAVE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE ME PROUD.
FOR NOW, SIMPLY SHOW ME YOUR ALLEGIANCE AND ALL WILL BE FORGIVEN.
SPISH
GIRLS?
NO, NO, NO, NO...

MS. ROMANOFF.
DID YOU KNOW YOU'VE BECOME A SEPARATE LINE ITEM ALL YOUR OWN IN S.H.I.E.L.D.'S OPERATING BUDGET?
WE DID SOME MATH.
WE COULD BUY NETFLIX SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR EVERYONE ON EARTH FOR THE COST OF ALL YOU'VE DESTROYED THESE LAST FEW WEEKS.
MARIA...
...MARIA, I...
SAVE YOUR BREATH AND GRAB A PARKA.
WE'VE BEEN KEEPING A CLOSE WATCH ON YOU. NOT EASY.
BUT WE'VE VERIFIED THAT--DESPITE APPEARANCES--YOU WERE BACKED INTO A CORNER TO PROTECT S.H.I.E.L.D., NOT TO TAKE US DOWN.
THANKS.
DIRECTOR, YOU HAVE A CALL.

HELLO, ANGELS!
STAYING CHILL, I HOPE.
WHAT THE **HELL**, STARK? WE'RE A LITTLE **BUSY** HERE--!
OH, I'VE BEEN MONITORING THE SITUATION.
ILLEGALLY.
A **DETAIL**. WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THAT I'VE ALREADY PLACED YOUR SIX ORPHANS.
REALLY?
THEY'LL BE HANDLED BY A FOSTER-CHILD PROGRAM I CAN PERSONALLY GUARANTEE TO BE THE BEST AND MOST COMPASSIONATE IN THE NATION.
I'VE ALSO PRE-FUNDED EACH GIRL'S SCHOOLING AS FAR AS SHE WANTS TO TAKE IT.
YOU KNOW THEY'RE ALL **UNDERAGE**, RIGHT?
CHEAP SHOT. AND AS FOR YOU, NATASHA...
...NEXT TIME, TURN TO YOUR **FRIENDS**. WE'RE HERE FOR YOU. ALWAYS.
IN FACT, IF YOU'D LIKE TO MEET UP AT MY SUITE IN **PARIS**, WE COULD--
TAK


HE'S RIGHT, YOU KNOW.
AS TIGHTLY AS YOU EMBRACE YOUR **LONE WOLF** ACT, YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TRULY ALONE OUT HERE.
C'MON, NAT.
I THINK IT'S TIME TO COME IN OUT OF THE COLD.
ME, TOO.

END


BLACK WIDOW

PHIL NOTO
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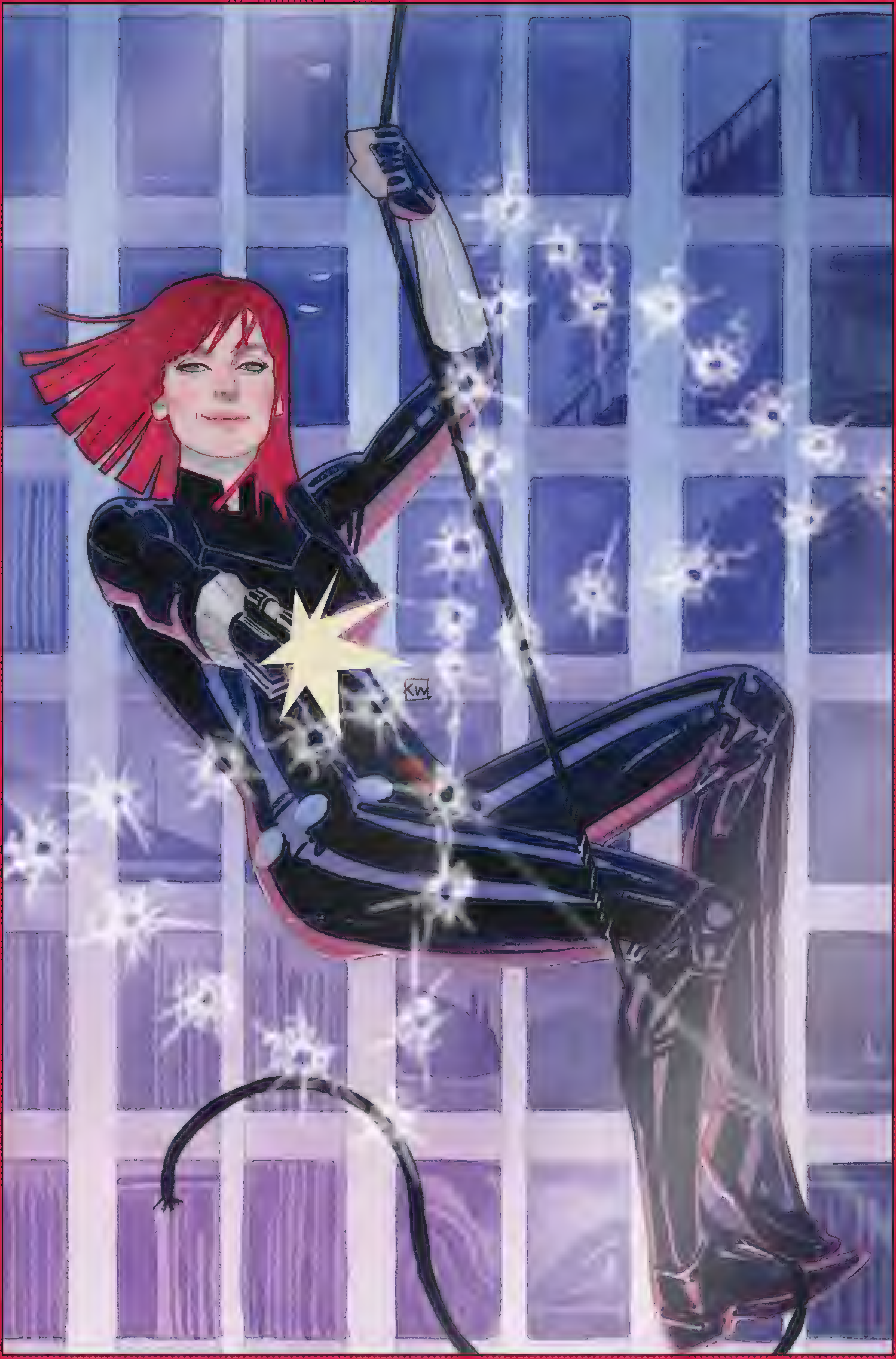

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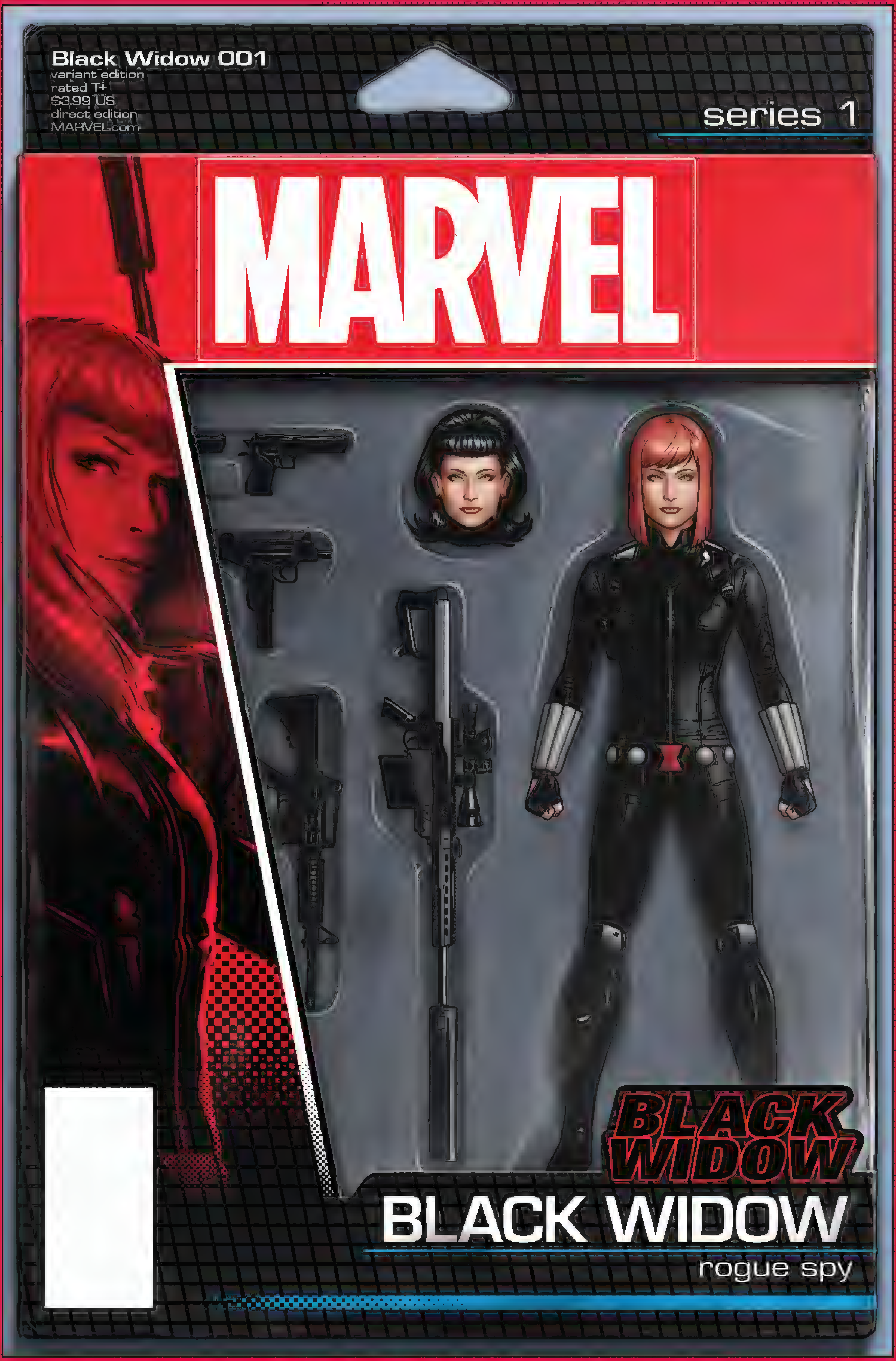
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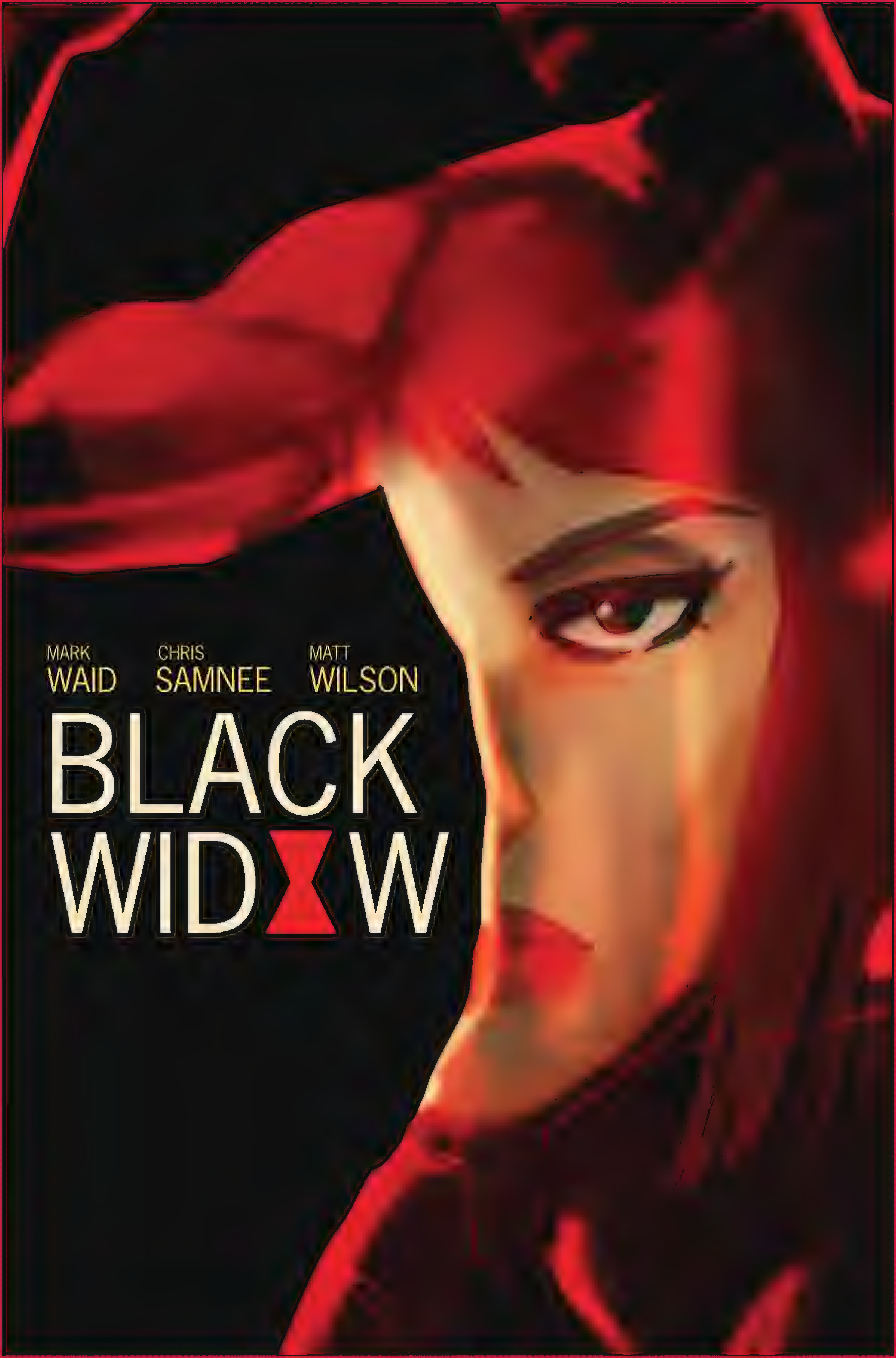

MARK
WAID
CHRIS
SAMNEE
MATT
WILSON
BLACK
WIDOW

ANNIE WU
NO. 2 VARIANT

BLACK WIDOW

A MARVEL COMICS EVENT

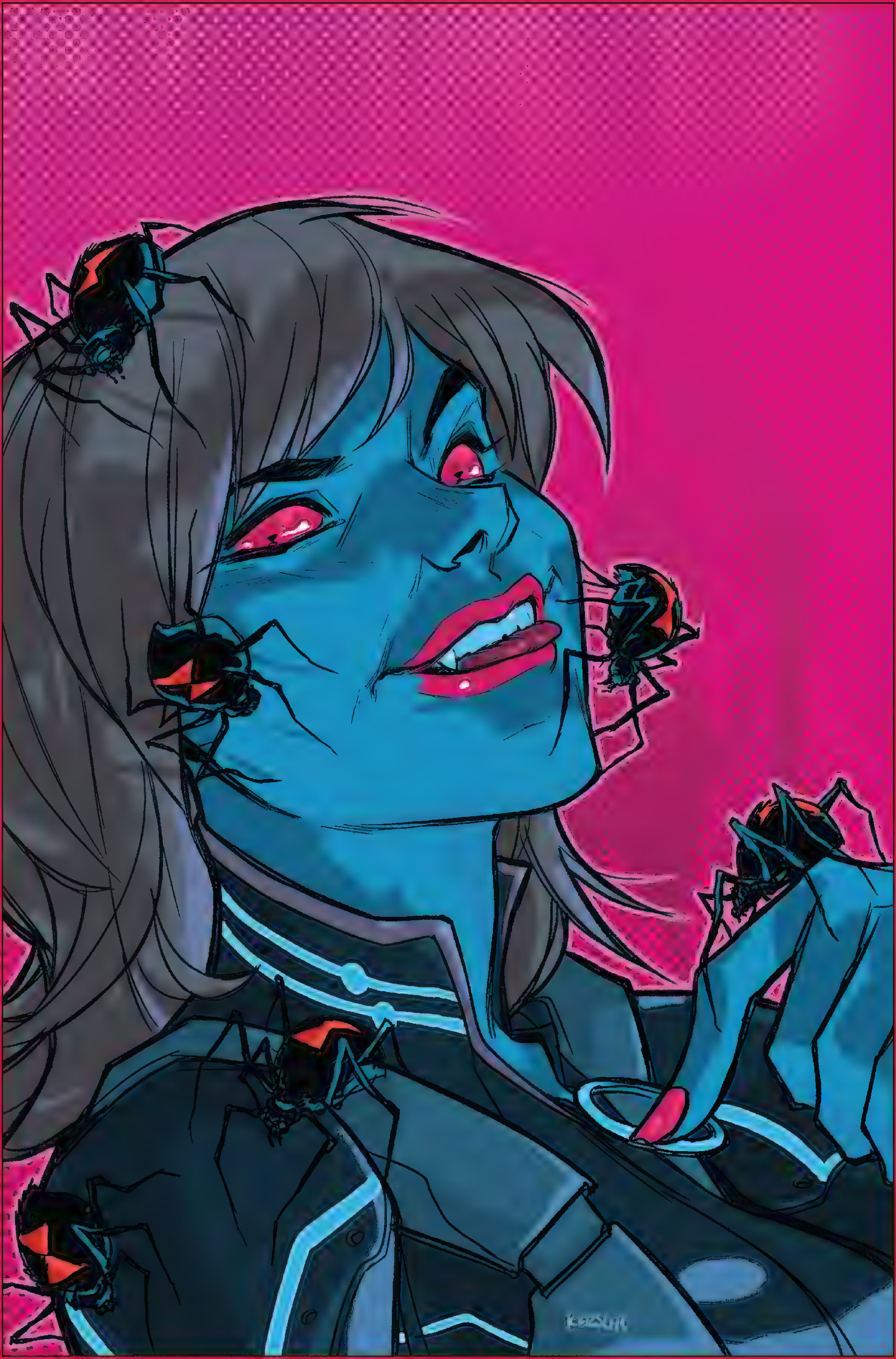
CIVIL WAR

BENGAL

NO. 2 CIVIL WAR VARIANT

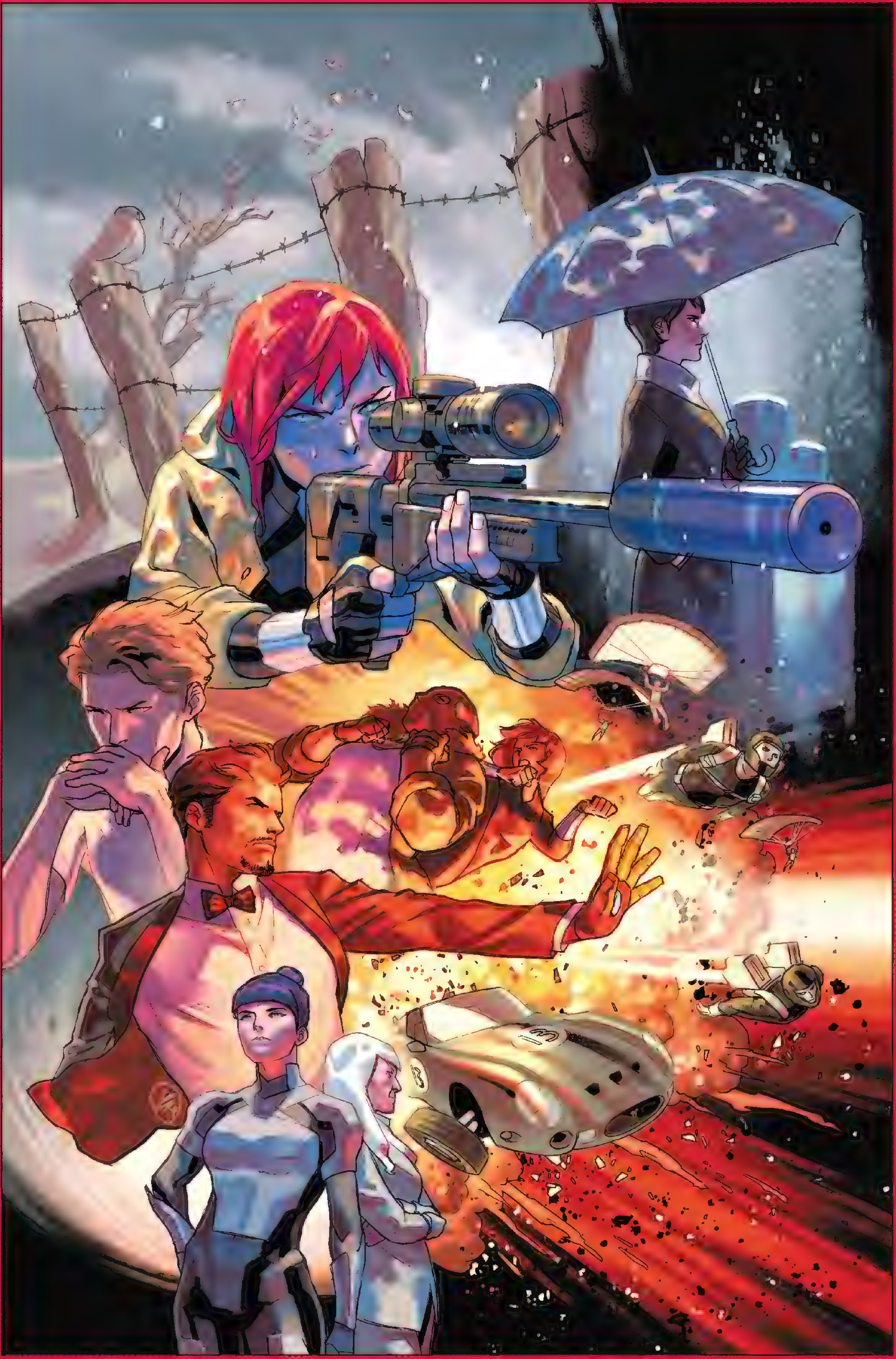
JOËLLE JONES & RACHELLE ROSENBERG

NO. 3 VARIANT



KARL KERSCHL

NO. 3 HORSEMEN OF APOCALYPSE VARIANT



YASMINE PUTRI

NO. 7 STORY THUS FAR VARIANT

PHIL NOTO

NO. 7 CHAMPIONS VARIANT

JUNE BRIGMAN, ROY RICHARDSON & RACHELLE ROSENBERG

NO. 7 CLASSIC VARIANT

ISSUE #1 AFTERWORD

HOLY SMOKES! What a ride, right??? And it's only going to get wilder for Black Widow from here! I have to be honest, I'm jealous of all of you. I know what's ahead for poor Natasha, and as amazing as I think it is (and I think it is AMAZING), you all get to discover it fully formed and with fresh eyes. You lucky ducks. I think you're going to love it.

How could you not? This book has one of the best teams in the business, and I'd like to take a moment to let them all introduce themselves and this book. Without further ado...

Well, we weren't gonna split up the team, that was our first decision. Chris Samnee, Matthew Wilson, Joe Caramagna and I became brothers during our run on DAREDEVIL. When we elected to leave that series, feeling like all the stories we knew to tell about Matt Murdock had been told, we wanted to keep the band together--but doing what? Chris and I talked about every Marvel character out there, from the Vision to the Avengers to Captain America to Nick Fury and everyone in between, but we couldn't land on what we felt was a dream project.

Then, literally as we were blocking out our last DAREDEVIL story, I was at one of Marvel's Creator Retreats when editor Jake Thomas mentioned that Black Widow might be available post-SECRET WARS. The whole team knew instantly that this was a perfect fit. The Daredevil connection was there for consistency, it was a solo book (one of Chris preferences) and because Chris loves this kind of storytelling, it meant we could work more closely than ever, co-plotting the book with Chris handling the way the story is told and me adding final dialogue. I think the finished comic reads like a natural leap from what we were doing in DAREDEVIL and yet feels completely different. And you won't believe the trials we have in store for Widow.

-Mark Waid

Working with Mark, Matthew and Joe on DAREDEVIL is the closest to an ideal working relationship I could have imagined--but with Jake and Kathleen joining in to create Team BLACK WIDOW, we're taking that all to the next level. This is what I thought making comics would be like ever since I was a little kid. Well, I pictured everyone sitting in a smoky office, wearing ties and fedoras, hunkered over their desks...but this is pretty close.

Gosh. I feel like we started working on this book ages ago and, even though we already have several issues in the can, we're only just getting started. I can't wait for you all to see what we have in store for Nat. Even if we are all making these comics in our pajamas.

- Chris Samnee

As DAREDEVIL came to a close I basically just said, "Take me with you! PLEASE!!!" And here I am, coloring BLACK WIDOW. Why? Maybe because they couldn't find another colorist. I don't know. But what I do know is, we've made a couple of issues of BLACK WIDOW already and this is some of the most fun I've had coloring a comic book. Like Mark said, it has a lot of natural transitions for us coming off of our DAREDEVIL run. But we've also given ourselves new challenges as we dive into Nat's world. As you can see from the comic you've just read, Chris and I wanted to develop a look that differed from our work on DAREDEVIL. I think I can speak for everyone when I say that we are really pleased with the results. I hope everyone enjoyed this action-packed opening and that you all plan to stick around and see what else we've got in store for my favorite superspy.

- **Matthew Wilson**

But enough from those jokers, what do YOU think? Send your super-secret spy missives to MHEROES@MARVEL.COM and remember to mark them OK TO PRINT!

Until next time!

Stay fly, spies.
-Jake T.

ISSUE #12 CREATOR FAREWELLS

All good things must come to an end, and this is the end of our very, very good thing. Glad you enjoyed it! And thanks for calling out Matthew Wilson's awesome work; he's really done some exceptional stuff with this run. As has our incredible letterer, Joe Caramagna, who navigated the pacing and design of these issues expertly!

In fact, our creative team was so great, let's let them have the last word. Take it away, gentlemen!

It's hard to believe that we've already wrapped twelve issues of BLACK WIDOW. Eighteen months ago, I was staring at a blank page trying to piece together the first issue. Today, I can look at all twelve issues in hand and know that all the sleepless nights were worth it. I tried to put 110% into every panel of every page, and it nearly killed me. I'm so grateful to the fans and readers who have been so supportive and vocal about how much they've enjoyed our story. I'm incredibly grateful to Marvel and our editors Jake and Kathleen for letting me run with it and taking a chance on me as a writer as well as an artist. And I'm of course grateful to my Team Widow collaborators Mark, Joe and--the peanut butter to my jelly--Matt, who has upped his game yet again with his work on this book. Regardless of what's to come, this will always be a career highlight for me. Thank you to everyone reading this. It wouldn't be the same without you.

- Chris Samnee

Almost always, the Marvel projects I'm proudest of are the ones I originally said "no" to. I said no to FANTASTIC FOUR, I said no to DAREDEVIL, I said "oh, hell no" to KA-ZAR, and I'm sure there are more. I've been at this a while. So when Team DD (Chris Samnee, Joe Caramagna, Matthew Wilson and I) left DAREDEVIL so Matt Murdock could be nudged in tone more closely toward his TV incarnation, we needed to find something new to do. We weren't going to split up the band.

It was Editor Jake Thomas who approached us about a Black Widow series and, because all my taste is in my mouth, I couldn't have cared less. Natasha Romanoff was a character I respected but had never been able to get a handle on, so my enthusiasm was minimal. But since Chris was excited, I figured it was worth throwing in with him, particularly because he wanted to be more involved in the storytelling as a formal co-plotter. And once he showed us all that first issue in thumbnail form, once he made clear his vision for Nat and her world, he made a convert out of me. (Matt and Joe, perpetually smarter than me, were already on board.) The kinetic energy that Chris brought to the Widow and the stage upon which she played was flat-out thrill-a-minute stunning. I'd like to think I carried my weight as a co-plotter, but probably not; most issues, the whole rest of the team felt like we were frantically holding on to whatever rocket Chris had let loose that month.

Most issues, Chris included super-rough dialogue in his thumbnails so I'd at least know what was going on as I added the "real" dialogue. That was where I was able to make my strongest contribution, though even then I'd steal from Chris' roughs from time to time. (In my defense, there are only so many ways to say, "Let's move!" or "Behind you!"--And I wasn't about to spend 30 minutes trying to come up with alternative phrasing just to be different.)

And now the end is upon us more quickly than I'd ever have dreamed. Natasha has done quite well by Team Widow (we four mooks plus Jake and underrated Assistant Editor Kathleen Wisneski). What began as a "fine, Chris, whatever" assignment turned into a blast for me and strengthened the way Chris and I collaborate, which is always a good thing. Thanks, Nat. And since I can hear Jake's play-off music, I'll end on that note.

- Mark Waid

When I saw the artwork for that opening scene of the first issue of this BLACK WIDOW run, I knew we were going to have a great time making this book. Here we are, twelve issues later, and I count this run as one of my career highlights. Working with this team on BLACK WIDOW has been an absolute joy in every respect. I hope you all had as much fun reading it as we did making it. It's been a real pleasure!

- Matthew Wilson

Thanks to Chris, Mark and Matt for keeping me around for their BLACK WIDOW run and giving me yet another career highlight. I look forward to what's next!

- Joe Caramagna

And until next time, as always...

Stay weird!
-Jake T.

A KNOCK-DOWN, DRAG-OUT TALE OF ACTION AND ESPIONAGE!

The award-winning creative team supreme of MARK WAID and CHRIS SAMNEE takes Natasha Romanoff to new heights — by forcing her out on the lam! The world's greatest superspy has a lifetime of secrets — and when some of the darkest ones are made public, nobody is safe. As S.H.I.E.L.D. turns on its once-greatest asset, the Widow seeks her own answers. But will Natasha's hunt for the Weeping Lion send her back to the one place she never wanted to go? There's an all-too-familiar room with a dark new name in the Widow's future. And there awaits the deadly Recluse — who's fixated on proving her worth by killing Natasha!

Collecting ***Black Widow (2016) #1-12*** — by Mark Waid, Chris Samnee and Matthew Wilson.

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